

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

No. 269.—VOL. XI.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING JULY 4, 1868.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THE WIDOW'S LETTER.]

LADY ROSLYN'S MYSTERY.

CHAPTER V.

Malcolm: Dispute it like a man.

Macduff: I shall do so.

Macbeth.

For some minutes the terrifying letter lay upon Mrs. Polack's lap, and her gaze remained fixed upon the frightened Alix. The ex-schoolmistress was a woman of uncommon nerve and presence of mind, but these qualities appeared to have deserted her in her present need. The uncertainty as to the contents of the missive seemed to her for a little time far better than the absolute knowledge that Alix was to be taken from her, and she dreaded to know the worst.

It seemed to her that until this moment she had never half realized the beauty, the truth, and the lovely character of her young charge.

How many years Alix Erle had been the sunshine of Anerly Lodge!

With her winning graces, her loving thoughtfulness, her bright, merry ways, she had crept into that stern woman's heart, and was now intrenched there so firmly that nothing could undermine her position.

"Oh, Alix, I did not know it until now," said Mrs. Polack, "but I love you just as much as I love Rellen! I did not feel worse than this when I received that note from him saying that he was going to India, and that he had not time to come and see me first. After all my hopes and dreams, this is so hard—"

"But, aunt dear," said the girl, the frightened look leaving her bright, dark face, "we may be troubling ourselves for nothing. Perhaps the letter merely contains a bank-note. Let us open it, and know the worst at once."

She resumed her seat upon the cushion at her friend's feet, and placed the letter in the old lady's hand.

There was a moment's hesitation, and then the ex-schoolmistress summoned back her courage, and tore open the letter.

There was nothing enclosed in it. As Mrs. Polack made this discovery, the letter shook in her hands, and she could not immediately read it.

It was but a brief missive, and it was written in the back-handed style of penmanship, mentioned by the lady as peculiar to her mysterious correspondent.

"What does he say, aunt?" questioned the girl. Mrs. Polack nerved herself to peruse the missive, and satisfy the natural anxiety of her charge.

It opened with the announcement that the writer was sorry at having been so long obliged by circumstances to neglect his niece, but hoped that her instructress had made her sufficiently useful, so that he would have to incur no farther expense on her part. He stated that she was now nearly eighteen years of age, quite old enough to earn her own living, if her intellects were not impaired, and that he purposed putting her in the way of supporting herself. He added that he had just returned to England, after an absence of thirteen years, and, as soon as he could arrange his affairs, should run down to Horleigh, to look after his niece. In short, Mrs. Polack might expect him at any time.

"He takes it for granted that I am living!" remarked Alix, when her friend paused.

"But there is a postscript, dear," said the old lady, proceeding to read it aloud.

The postscript declared that the writer did not know if his niece were living or dead, but he feared the latter, remembering her delicate constitution when a child. If she were living, he had reason to fear that her intelligence was below the average, and should his fears prove well founded, he should take immediate steps as to her reception in some institution for imbeciles.

The idea struck Alix as so exceedingly ludicrous, that she gave utterance to a merry peal of laughter.

Her mirth did more to restore Mrs. Polack to herself than a volume of protestations could have done.

"He alludes, my love," she said, "to the terrible drugging you received before being brought to me.

My suspicions have received full confirmation. Those drugs were given you to make you imbecile—but for what reason I cannot even guess. How can this man profit by your lack of intelligence? There is some deep mystery here!"

"He will be slightly astonished to discover that his drugs did not injure me in the least, beyond a temporary stupefaction," declared Alix, with considerable satisfaction.

"I dread to have you see him, dear. When he finds you are not imbecile, as he expects, he may harm you in some way. He will, in any case, I fear, take you from me," and the old lady wrung her hands.

"Let him try it!" said the girl, with emphasis, and her dark eyes glowed with sudden resolution.

"My poor child, what could we do against him? He is without doubt your relative or guardian, and can legally claim your obedience. And if I were to testify all I know and suspect against him, might my suspicions not be considered as an old woman's fancies? Could he not make some plausible explanation of the facts which I consider so remarkable? If he be indeed a villain, as I believe him to be, he is certainly subtle enough to protect himself against assault from anyone. He doubtless has elaborate plans made for any event!"

The girl's face became clouded.

"The truth is, Alix, you are like a bird in the snare. The more you struggle, the tighter will become your bonds. If he come, I should like him to think you dead. I see no safety otherwise."

"But everyone in Horleigh would contradict you, aunt. He would ask somebody at the station, and everybody knows little Alix Erle!"

The ex-schoolmistress uttered a despairing exclamation.

"You are right, Alix—the straightforward plan is the only one we can adopt. I wish Rellen was here. Your uncle may arrive at any moment and carry you off before my son's return. Oh, I am almost wild!"

"Dear aunt," said Alix, with tender soothing, forgetting her own fears and grief in those of her



friend. "Let us hope for the best. We really have no reason for sorrow. My uncle says that, if I can do so, I must earn my own living. So long as he is not obliged to support me, he cannot care where or how I earn it, and, if I choose to stay with you who want and need me, it cannot matter to him."

"That looks reasonable. Do not be troubled, dear Aunt Lettice. Nothing can take me from you!"

Notwithstanding that hopeful assurance, the gloom did not depart from Mrs. Polack, and a strange shadow rested upon Alix.

There seemed to both a hidden threatening in that letter—a threatening that, as they re-read the missive, was actually deadly and menacing, though in what particular sentence it was couched neither could have told. But the impression remained the same, and was sufficient to weigh upon both with crushing force.

Mrs. Polack leaned back in her chair, and gave herself up to her sorrow, reiterating frequently her wish that her son would come; but Alix, active and young, strove to shake off her presentiment of coming evil, and to cheer her friend.

She put away the ominous letter, and flitted in and out of the house, gathering flowers, arranging bouquets, &c., which when finished were carried upstairs, and employed in decorating Rellen Polack's room—a very pretty front chamber, luxuriously fitted up.

There was something quite oriental in the interior aspect of that room. Although not gaudy, there was a tropical glow over everything. The carpet was a bewildering mass of gorgeous colouring, the tables were covered with magnificently embroidered cloths, the thread employed in embroidering them being pure gold wire. There was a number of choice articles and curiosities upon the tables, and the carved brackets on the walls—curiously carved chibouques, with amber mouth-pieces, perfectly coloured meerschauts, silver-bound cigar-cases, and a host of pretty trifles that seemed brought from every land beneath the sun.

In the midst of these costly trinkets, Alix set a vase of flowers, and others were put upon the mantelpiece. She then brought from her own room a pair of elegantly-embroidered slippers, and placed them before the easy-chair, upon the back of which was spread a handsome dressing-gown.

The slippers she had finished but the day before, and were intended as a gift to the son of her friend.

Her preparations completed, she ran down-stairs to the drawing-room.

The hours passed away, and there was no arrival. The object of their dread did not make his appearance, any more than the object of their love.

"Oh, this is dreary!" sighed the maiden, as the afternoon sun sent its slanting beams into the drawing-room. "Why don't Rellen come? Can anything have happened to him?"

Mrs. Polack bent upon her an anxious, loving glance.

Alix was looking charmingly, and her fond friend might well be pardoned for thinking that in all the world there was no beauty that could compare with that of her darling.

She had exchanged her pink morning dress for an airy, floating robe of white tulle, arranged in a succession of light puffs from the hem to the shoulders, and her waist was encircled by a broad white sash that fell behind her nearly to the floor. Her hair was arranged in feathery curls, giving a sweet expression to her face. Her only ornaments were a necklace and bracelets of flexible gold—gifts from Mrs. Polack that very morning.

"Oh, aunt, some one is coming!" cried Alix, after a brief pause, continuing to stand by the window and look towards the village. "Perhaps it's that terrible man! There's a fly coming up the hill, and I've a presentiment that it's coming here. Yes, it is—it is!"

She uttered the last words in a hushed, apprehensive tone, watching the vehicle as it paused at the gate, and the driver jumped down to permit his fare to alight.

The next moment her face had become fairly radiant, her eyes shone with joy, and her tones were full of glee, as she cried:

"Aunt Lettice, Rellen has come!"

Mrs. Polack came towards the window, and looked out over the head of the little maiden.

"We will go and meet him, my love," she said, moving towards the door.

But Alix blushed and hung back with a shyness that charmed the old lady, who saw in it the timidity of love.

Before the ex-schoolmistress had gained the door, it opened, and, with an eager step, a young man entered the room.

He was the same person who had visited Lady

Roslyn's bridal chamber, and demanded a price for his silence—the same person who had years before experienced such a brilliant career in the fashionable world as the Count Lechelle!

This heartless, elegant man, was then the idolized son of Mrs. Polack!

He was the one whom she longed to see the husband of Alix Erle, and whom Alix herself possibly loved with all the ardour of a fresh, young, and grateful heart.

As well might the dove mate with the hawk! As well might the innocent lamb mate with the deadly tiger of the jungle!

But at Anerly Lodge, he was known only as Rellen Polack, and everyone there believed him as noble and good as he appeared. No one, not even his mother, dreamed of his career as the Count Lechelle. She believed him to be engaged in speculations in London that would some time or other make him a millionaire, and she exulted in his business qualifications, declaring that he would never lose sight of the fact that he was a gentleman.

For years she had sounded his praises in the ears of Alix, and she believed that she had done it so effectually, as to make the girl regard him with the same loving reverence she accorded him.

But even the mother did not fully understand her son.

There had been several years during which he had been lost to her, when she had neither heard of or from him—the years succeeding his disappearance from society as a titled Frenchman. He had returned but a few weeks since, more elegant and careless than ever, saying that he had been to India, where he had made a small fortune. He had brought with him the Persian carpet, the chibouques, and other eastern luxuries now adorning his room, and he had also brought costly presents of Indian workmanship for his mother and her charge.

But those were the only evidences of a visit on his part to India.

So that, after all, the mystery of his long absence remained a secret.

For the presents he brought could as well have been bought in the shops of London or Paris as in the shops of Bombay or Calcutta; but that idea had not occurred to the loving couple who so eagerly welcomed his return.

As he now entered the drawing-room at the Lodge, his attire was even more scrupulously elegant than on his previous evening's visit to the youthful Countess of Roslyn. The same jewels flashed upon his fingers and in his shirt front, the same pin gleamed from his neck-tie, and the same heavy chain strayed across his delicate waistcoat. His pale moustache was glossy and faintly scented, and the remainder of his face was smoothly shaven.

But his appearance was scarcely remarked by the two women in their delight at beholding him.

Mrs. Polack was the first to come forward to greet him, and she embraced him with all the tenderness of a fond mother, not noticing how quietly he manoeuvred to preserve his hair from disarrangement at her hands.

When she released him, he looked around, saying:

"Where is Alix, mother?"

Blushing little Alix came into view from behind her friend, and extended her hand to him, who took it and pressed it. He made a movement as if to kiss her, but she modestly retreated, and the salute was not given.

"You see I have kept my promise of coming home on your birthday, Alix," he said, accepting the chair his mother proffered him.

"But I had almost given it up," declared the little maiden. "I expected you early this morning."

"I could not come then. I was obliged to be in town, but 'better late than never,' you know. I suppose you have received a quantity of birth-day gifts?"

"Aunt gave me these," and Alix touched the ornaments she wore. "The rector sent me a beautifully-bound prayer-book, and his wife gave me a real Chinese work-box. But your coming is the best present of all, Rellen," she added.

Count Lechelle, as we shall continue occasionally to call him, smiled with gratification, and good Mrs. Polack directed a beaming look upon her lovely charge.

"I am glad to be welcome, Alix," he said, smiling. "The truth is, I have knocked about the world so much, that I had almost grown to think there was no such thing as disinterested love. It's like a different atmosphere, coming back to the dear old Lodge and to the dear home faces."

And he looked down from the old lady to the fresh young girl.

As there is no one utterly bad and without some redeeming spark of virtue, so Rellen Polack had one unsullied corner in his selfish, wicked heart. It was

there he cherished those two women as superior beings, and many a model son has less real love for his mother, than Rellen had for his. He always treated her with deference and respect, and he regarded the old lady as a grand and noble woman. Her very severity and sternness had a charm for his easy-going nature. He could never forget how she had worked for him, how she had sacrificed her ease and comfort for twenty-five years that he might have a good education and a start in life.

If he loved her, he worshipped the dark little beauty whom she cherished as a daughter. Every movement of Alex Erle possessed a strange fascination for him. Every turn of her small head, with its wealth of dark, glossy hair, every look of her bright eyes, every flash of her changing cheek, every tone of her sweet voice, thrilled him to the heart, and it was his dearest dream to make her loveless his own, to own her as his wife.

There were moments when the little good within his soul urged him to abandon his project, to refrain from linking her pure, innocent life to his darkened one, but those moments were few. She would make the wife he yearned for, pure, lovely, and child-like, and it was not often he felt generous enough to think of giving her up, on the ground of his own unworthiness.

All this wild passion for her had sprung into active being since his return a few weeks before, and this birth-day visit to the Lodge had for its ultimate object the probing of her heart towards him.

"You've roamed the world enough, Rellen," said his mother. "It's time you settled down in a home of your own. You are thirty-two years old, although it don't seem possible."

"Perhaps I shall 'settle down' soon, as you call it, mother," he answered, gaily. "It will all depend upon one thing whether I do or not."

"And what is that?"

"I won't explain now," he said, with a significant glance at the unconscious Alix.

The mother answered by an approving glance, and he remarked:

"I am nearly forgetting to give Alix her birthday gifts. I think Michael took my portmanteau up to my room, and, if you will excuse me, I will run upstairs a moment."

He smiled as he noticed the girl's involuntary look of eagerness, and sauntered from the room.

He was not gone long, and when he returned, his countenance wore a pleased expression. He bore in his arms a parcel done up in silver paper, and as he proceeded to untie it, he said:

"You had a pleasant surprise for me, Alix, in that pair of slippers. They are beautifully executed, and the design is unusually fine!"

"I designed them myself, Rellen."

"I might have known it. It seems to me that no one has such a refined taste and such delicate fancies as our little Alix, mother," he remarked, addressing Mrs. Polack. "But here is your present, dear. I hope you will like it, and that it will have more than a monetary value in your eyes, for I bought it myself in Cashmere! It is an unusual thing for an European to penetrate into that lovely land, but I had the good fortune to attach myself to the suite of a powerful Rajah, and was permitted unusual facilities for seeing—and being seen," and he smiled. "I saw that shawl upon the person of the Rajah himself, wound around his waist and knotted at the side. I could not help being struck by its fineness, and I often thought what a sensation it would create here. You know they don't bring the finest shawls here. The Cashmerians retain all the best ones."

"But how did you get it, Rellen?" inquired Mrs. Polack, while Alix kept her eyes upon the unopened parcel.

"Why, we were assaulted by a rival tribe, and I saved the life of the Rajah at the risk of my own. In his gratitude, he bade me name my own reward. I thought of money, for I was not rich, but the remembrance of a pair of bright eyes at home decided me, and I begged for the shawl. He gave it to me, and I brought it home, although more than once I was beset with robbers, and several times was offered a fabulous price for it!"

With this explanation, perfectly satisfactory to the admiring and unquestioning women, he flung open the parcel.

As he did so, a small folded paper fell out. He picked it up quickly, with a look of annoyance, before it was noticed, and crumpled it into his pocket.

Had Alix or her friend been permitted to examine it, they would have been astonished to learn that it was a bill for this same shawl, proving it to have been purchased that very morning, at an eminent house in London.

Assured that its import was unsuspected, Lechelle spread open the gorgeous fabric, and listened to the admiring remarks of the women.

"I shall think so much of it, Rellen," said the little maiden, while Mrs. Polack was examining the back of the shawl. "I shall never wear it, but I shall think of that old Rajah who wore it first, how you risked your life to get it, and how you carried it through every danger, preserving it for me!"

"I am receiving my reward," he answered.

"I should never have thought of its having been worn," said the ex-schoolmistress. "Why, it looks as fresh and new as if it had just been unpacked!"

"It is nearly new, mother; the Rajah wore it so little. It was packed under a heavy weight in my trunk coming home, and so it looks fresh. Such a thing endures for ever."

"That is true—an Indian shawl is often preserved as an heir-loom," declared Mrs. Polack.

Rellen caught up the gorgeous shawl and laid it carelessly upon Alix's shoulders, and the girl walked about to show it off, her face glowing with gratitude and pleasure, for she had a strange love of beautiful things.

"But that is not your only gift, Alix," said Lechelle. "My second present has no romantic history as a whole, but I think that jewels are the poetry of nature, just as flowers are. Hold out your hand!"

Alix obeyed, and he clasped upon her rounded arm the diamond bracelet that had been bestowed upon him by the bride of Lord Roslyn.

"Those gems are not brighter than your eyes, Alix," he said.

"It is very, very beautiful," murmured the girl. "Too beautiful for me, Rellen."

He made a gallant protestation against such a monstrous assertion.

"It must have cost a small fortune, Rellen," observed his mother.

"But a trifle to what I shall have, mother. I bought it this morning in town. I can well afford it. My speculations are beginning to yield handsomely. One of them," and a singular expression gleamed in his eyes, "promises to be a perfect mine of wealth. It was from that I derived the money for the purchase of that trinket!"

"Trinket!" exclaimed Alix, with pretended indignation. "Oh, Rellen, it is the most beautiful thing in the world!"

"Not quite. But wear it, Alix. A diamond star is a suitable emblem of yourself."

The young girl uttered her thanks in a modest way, more with her eyes than her tongue, and sat down, with the bracelet on her arm and the shawl falling about her in graceful folds.

"You are a little gem, Alix," said Count Lechelle, admiringly. "I wonder what would become of us without you!"

Mrs. Polack started, suddenly remembering the letter she had received from Alix's guardian.

"Rellen, your words remind me of something I have to say to you. We want your advice, and, it may be, protection. A terrible danger is threatening our Alix. We are liable to lose her at any moment!"

Rellen looked at his mother incredulously, and she tried to gather strength to enter upon her sad revelation.

CHAPTER VI.

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not.

Shelley.

THE Earl of Roslyn was a strictly honourable man, and he did not long permit himself to brood over what "might have been." On first reading the notice of Mr. Adrian's decease in India, his heart had thrilled with the remembrance of the woman rendered by that death a widow, and he had lamented his haste in marrying the Lady Adine Sayton. If he had only waited, the woman whom alone he had ever loved, might have become his wife.

But "sober second thoughts" induced him to modify his regrets. He called to mind that he had offered his heart and hand to the now Mrs. Adrian, and that, although she had long encouraged him and smiled upon his eager suit, she had declined his proffer of marriage, reminding him that two lives stood between him and the Eridom of Roslyn, and that she should marry for fortune and position.

So she had wedded the Hon. Mr. Adrian.

The two lives, those of his father and elder brother, had at one fell stroke, by a railway accident, been soon after ended, and he had become Earl of Roslyn, but the woman he had loved had left England with her husband, and he had become cynical and almost a sceptic with regard to a woman's capacity for disinterested affection.

As he remembered her heartless conduct, and a suspicion he had always entertained, that her heart had really been given to him, he experienced a

strange exultation in the fact that he was married. What would she think when she should hear that he had taken a bride—that he had given Roslyn a countess? He gloried in his bride's beauty as he had never done before, and wished that he might be able to introduce her to Mrs. Adrian, that he might see the envy and jealousy of the latter.

The young countess was several years younger than the object of his first love, and so transcendently lovely that the earl imagined that Mrs. Adrian's heart would be racked to its core on beholding her.

"If anything can reconcile me to my marriage now that Henrietta is free, it is that my bride is so beautiful and queenly," he thought, on the morning subsequent to his marriage, as he entered the cool and shaded morning-room to await the appearance of his countess and of Mr. Malvern. "Adine has another advantage over Henrietta. Adrian besides youth and beauty. It is that she is the soul of honour. She may have entertained a girlish fancy for Harold Bevan, but she would never have refused him to become a countess if she loved him. She does not love me, I know, but it is not necessary she should. I have confidence enough in her to believe that she is all that she seems!" and a look of content appeared on his face.

But then he knew nothing of the fearful secret shared by her and Count Lechelle. He dreamed nothing of the pensioner who had established himself as a permanent drain upon her resources, nor of her strange inner life, hidden from his gaze as well as from that of the world.

He did not even imagine that she carried in her soul a terrible mystery, which she guarded more carefully than her life, and which, if it had been known by him, would have placed an effectual barrier in the way of their marriage, which would even now cause their eternal separation!

Remorseful for his temporary treason to her, he awaited her appearance with something of a lover's impatience, glancing frequently at the door.

His relative, Vayle Malvern, was the first to join him, and he greeted him with a cold bow, not forgetful of Malvern's manner and remarks upon the previous evening.

But the young gentleman was smiling and imperturbable, not appearing to notice his coldness, and remarked upon the weather and kindred topics, as if determined to ignore the change in his manner, and to re-establish himself upon a friendly footing.

He had partially succeeded in his efforts, when the bride entered the room.

Her husband went forward to meet her, his countenance expressive of his admiration for her.

Her white morning dress of India muslin with blue ribbons was infinitely becoming to her, and her glittering hair rippled in waves away from her enchanting face, and was confined at the back with azure ribbon.

As much as Malvern disliked her now, for the double reasons we have elsewhere given, he could not avoid feeling a pang of envy that this glorious prize belonged to another.

For a moment a murderous feeling gathered in his heart as he saw the earl take the hand of his bride and lead her to a seat, stationing himself beside her, but it quickly passed away.

But it left a bitter feeling behind it.

He was aware that the earl had not wedded for love, that he chose the Lady Adine Sayton for her many personal and social charms, and not for the happiness to be derived from her constant companionship.

This knowledge had inspired him with a hope that for him all was not yet lost—that his succession to the title and estates of Roslyn might yet be accomplished.

Schemes flitted through his mind of arousing the jealousy of the unloving bride, and skilfully inducing her to leave her husband, in which case, as the earl would be debarré from a second marriage, his own prospects would brighten.

He resolved to be vigilant and resolute, ready to make the best of any opportunity that should present itself, and to be not over-scrupulous with regard to the means to bring about the desired end.

While he was resolving thus, breakfast was announced, and the earl conducted his bride to the breakfast-room, a pleasant shaded parlour, redolent with the perfume of flowers, and brightened by beams of the morning sunshine. It had long windows, looking out into a garden, where a fountain played unceasingly, mounds of blossoms yielded their fragrance to the wooing breeze, and from which could be seen in the background a belt of woodland—one of the glories of Roslyn.

The bride took her place at the table with a quiet, at-home air, and the earl seated himself opposite, while Malvern glided into a place at the side.

The newly-married pair engaged in conversation,

without any of those shy, loving glances and tender epithets to which wedded lovers are addicted, and Malvern did not once feel himself *de trop*, as he must inevitably have done had his host and hostess loved each other.

There was no lack of courtesy, however, and Lady Roslyn exercised such gentle, graceful tact, that the earl quite forgot his recent thoughts about Mrs. Adrian, and congratulated himself on having secured such a charming, sensible wife, to give dignity and beauty to his ancestral home.

Had there been no Vayle Malvern in existence, and had the widowed Mrs. Adrian never again crossed the earl's path, it is quite probable that his lordship's admiration for his bride might have deepened into a quiet, steady affection, and their lives might have glided on in a peaceful current as regarded each other, and the countess, with her fearful secret coiled in her heart, might have passed to the world as a happy and enviable woman.

But fate had decreed struggles and trials to the young couple, instead of calm and quiet.

The satisfaction that now filled Lord Roslyn's heart was to be but short-lived.

It vanished with the opening of the letter-bag, which the portly old butler brought in upon a salver, and deposited by the side of his master.

The earl produced a key from his pocket, unlocked the bag, and proceeded to take out its contents.

There was nothing for the countess, but she had expected nothing, as she had not yet worn her new name for a whole day, nor been many hours in her new home.

There was a letter or two and some newspapers for Malvern, and the remainder of the morning's post was found to belong to Lord Roslyn, who piled them beside his plate, and dismissed the butler with the empty bag.

"I beg you will read your letters, Eustace," said the young countess; "they may contain something of importance."

Thus adjured, his lordship gave her the morning paper to peruse, and proceeded to open his letters.

Many of them were mere business epistles and business cards, such as usually flow in upon noted people after any great family event, and many more contained friendly congratulations upon his lordship's marriage, with aspirations for his future happiness, and that of his bride.

These were all comparatively unimportant, and Lord Roslyn was about to push them all aside, when his eye rested upon a dainty little missive, half-hidden by a newspaper.

He caught it up instantly, examined it anxiously, and with a sinking at his heart.

It was post-marked Vienna, and was addressed in a delicate, feminine handwriting, which he recognized.

It was that of Mrs. Adrian.

Vayle Malvern was watching him furtively under cover of a paper, and did not fail to mark the sudden blanching of his face, and a tremulous motion about his lips.

"Do you apprehend bad news, my lord?" he asked, carelessly, as the earl was about to transfer the letter, unopened, to his pocket.

"Oh, no," was the response, and Lord Roslyn affected indifference, and cut open the letter with the silver ferule of his knife.

A small sheet of rose-coloured paper fell out, diffusing a delicate rose-scent upon the atmosphere, that was perceptible even among the odours of the freshly-gathered flowers upon the table.

Lady Roslyn looked up, aware by the perfume that it was a woman's letter.

For a moment the earl was annoyed at the receipt of the letter, and at the notice it excited, but he soon forgot his annoyance in tracing its import.

The first thing he observed was, that it was dated a fortnight back—before the announcement of his engagement had appeared in the Court News.

Its posting had evidently been carelessly delayed by the servant to whom it had been entrusted, or it had been delayed *en route*.

It began by informing him of the death of the writer's husband, which news she had just received, and stated that she was of course much prostrated by the ill tidings, although not nearly as much so as she should have been, had Adrian been the object of her best love. This little intimation was followed by an insinuation, that she had made a fatal mistake in her marriage, sacrificing her heart's best impulses to a vain ambition, which had, after all, been defeated. Her husband had never succeeded to the title to which he had been heir, and her married life had not been happy, as she might remark in confidence to one of whom she had often thought with, perhaps, more than sisterly affection. The chief point of the letter was, that she was coming home immediately, and should take possession of a

house she owned not far distant from Roslyn Manor, and she desired to bespeak the friendship of so influential a neighbour as the Earl of Roslyn.

To this precious document was appended the signature of Henrietta Adrian.

Although not vain, the earl could not help seeing an evident desire on the part of the young widow to renew her influence over him, and he wished he could see her countenance when she learned that he was married.

"My letter is from Mrs. Adrian, Adine," he said, the colour rising to his cheeks, as he encountered his bride's gaze. "Her husband is dead, and she is about to return to England."

"I was not aware you corresponded with her, Eustace," returned Lady Roslyn, with unaffected indifference.

"I have not been in the habit of doing so. This is, in fact, the first letter I have received from her since her marriage years ago. She intends to take possession of her house two or three miles from here."

"It is a dreary little place, and the most insignificant one within a dozen miles," remarked Malvern; "I mean the most insignificant of any having pretensions to being a gentleman's residence. It is nothing but a box—a little square box. I dare say it looks well enough inside, but it has barely land enough to stand upon."

"She is a widow, you know, and does not require a mansion," answered the earl.

"I hear she is obliged to economize too," said Malvern, desirous of making a great affair out of the reception of the letter. "She has another house in Surrey, but I dare say she lets that. I suppose she had not received any intimation of your intended marriage, my lord?"

Lord Roslyn replied in the negative.

Malvern smiled significantly.

The earl was seriously annoyed, but the countess, while keenly alive to all that was going on, neither felt nor cared anything with regard to her husband's affairs.

She was rather glad than otherwise at his reception of the letter, since it would occupy him, and leave her free to indulge in her own meditations.

A heavy weight seemed to be resting upon her. For years she had thought Count Lechelle dead, and now he had reappeared to prey like a vampire upon her. She felt almost wild at times. Fears lest the earl should meet him upon the occasion of some visit to her, and suspect her secret, came over her at times, chilling the blood in her veins, and rising like an awful spectre before her.

And she had another cause for anxiety.

That very morning, before he had quitted her side to attire himself for breakfast, her husband had casually mentioned her diamond star-bracelet, and informed her that that had been worn by his mother when he was a little boy, and that when he had grown older she had given it to him, telling him to bestow it upon his future wife. He added that he valued it far above its price, and hoped she would wear it often, as his mother had done.

Lady Roslyn had not replied, but she trembled at the fatality that had impelled her to take that particular ornament. She had plenty of others, without valuable associations, bridal gifts from her guardian and friends, and why had she not taken one of them?

Why had she in her haste caught up the very one of all others whose absence would be noticed, and which might perhaps lead to suspicious and questionings?

She did not again allude to Mrs. Adrian's letter, and her husband was glad to drop the subject, while Malvern, satisfied with what he had done, became silent.

But although the letter was put out of sight, its contents were not forgotten by the earl. They had brought back to his mind his youthful, hopeful days, when Henrietta Adrian seemed to him the fairest and noblest woman in the world, when he had written her volumes of adulatory poems, when a flower from her hand was treasured as beyond all price, and when a smile from her was enough to make a whole day full of sunshine.

He felt the olden glow at his heart, and when he led his bride from the table out into the flower-garden, he was so absent-minded as not to hear Malvern's audible and smiling comment upon his abstractedness.

As they wandered down the shady walks, Vaile would have left them to themselves, but for the countess's invitation to remain with them, and he kept at her side.

The earl pointed out to his young wife his favourite nooks in the garden, the seat under the thorns where he frequently came with his books, &c., and led her through the orangery, the pinery, the green-houses, and grapery, the new Lady of

Roslyn winning golden opinions wherever she went from the faithful old servants of the family.

Like a true English lady, the young countess was affable and gentle to those of inferior station. Her haughtiness was all reserved for her equals, and the gardeners looked after her as if she had been incarnate sunshine, muttering blessings upon her golden head, and upon the day when she became their mistress.

"You are just beginning to be acquainted with your new home, Adine," he said, as they returned to the morning-room. "I will drive you over the estate myself this morning, and show you the brook that runs through the park, and all the beauties of the place."

The countess expressed her pleasure at the invitation, accepting it.

She had hardly done so, when the butler entered, bringing a note to his master upon a silver salver.

The earl opened it and read it, with changing colour.

"My dear," he said, giving the missive to his wife to read, "this is from Mrs. Adrian. She has arrived at her house, and wishes me to call upon her this morning."

"Then I'll absolve you from your promise to drive me," answered the countess; "or we can go this afternoon. It will give me pleasure to have you call upon her, as I should like to make Mrs. Adrian's acquaintance."

Much relieved by her quiet air, and secretly pleased, the earl made some feeble objections, but soon after yielded to her wish, and retired to his room to prepare himself for his intended call.

An hour later, he set out to call upon the woman whom he felt that he still loved, despite the fact that he was wedded to another.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

NEAR the site of ancient Nineveh a summer temperature of 140 deg. F. has been experienced, and is the highest temperature authentically recorded.

A NEW difficulty is likely to delay the opening of the Mont Cenis Summit Railway, it "having been found that the play in the springs of the engine has a tendency to tear up the centre rail gripped by the auxiliary wheels."

STEEL BILLIARD BALLS.—Among other new uses of steel, one of the latest, as we learn from a foreign contemporary, is the employment of this metal in the manufacture of billiard balls, in place of ivory. Such balls are recommended for their great elasticity and their freedom from any liability of cracking.

MAKING WHITE LEAD.—A new process for producing an excellent article of white lead, has been devised by M. A. Giffard; the following is the plan referred to: Granulated metallic lead is placed in a barrel, with one fourth of its weight of water. By a suitable arrangement the barrel and contents are rotated about forty turns per minute, while a continuous current of air is forced through at the same time. After revolving for about two hours almost all the lead will be oxidized, and now a current of carbonic acid is substituted for the air, and the rotation continued for five hours longer, when the true white lead, which constitutes almost the entire contents of the barrel, can be separated by decantation, washed and dried.

THE DARDANELLES GIANT CANNON.—Within the last few days one of the giant cannons of the Dardanelles and some shot for it were received at the Royal Arsenal. We understand that this piece of ordnance, which is one of the greatest curiosities in artillery, was presented to our Government by the Turkish Government, and it is to be deposited in the museum of artillery in the repository grounds at Woolwich. The gun is bronze, and in two parts; the hind part, or powder chamber, screwing into the forepart, or shot chamber. The screw in the hind part is a curiosity in itself. It is 14 inches long, and has five threads, about three inches wide and deep; the diameter of the screw is 24 inches. The hind piece itself very much resembles in form a windlass or capstan, having hand or lever holes all round at both ends for the purpose of screwing it to the front piece. The gun is without any trunnions, being intended to be laid on sleepers on the ground, as other similar guns are now placed in the batteries on the Dardanelles. It is evidently of great age, and similar to that described by Gibbon in his "Decline and Fall," as employed by Mahomet II. at the siege of Adrianople in 1453 (vol. xii., page 197). The powder chamber in the breech part is 6½ feet long and 10 inches in diameter. The bore, or shot chamber, is 25 inches in diameter. The shot for this monster are round and of white granite; they weigh 650 lb. each. The following are about the weight and dimensions of this interesting piece of artillery:

Breech part, 9 tons 18 cwt.; length, 7 feet; front part, 8 tons 17 cwt.; length, 10 feet. There is a curious account of it in the "Memoirs of Baron de Tott," which was travestied very comically in the "Life and Adventures of Baron Munchausen," one of the delights of our boyhood.

ENDLESS WIRE ROPES FOR COLLIERIES.

THE introduction of endless ropes, for doing away with horse-power in drawing coal along inclines, is just now exciting a good deal of interest in South Yorkshire, where the experiment has been tried on an extensive scale at one of the largest collieries in the district, and with the most successful results. For the purpose of making the system more generally known, Mr. Platts, the manager of the Wharfedale Silkestone Colliery, where the ropes have been put down, invited a number of colliery owners and mining engineers to see the mode of working the ropes. Amongst those present were Mr. P. Cooper, Mr. R. Pease, Mr. W. Maddison, Mr. Miller, Mr. Walker, Mr. Stacey, &c., &c. After making the usual preparation the party descended to the thin or park-gate seam, which is only about eighty-seven yards from the top. Here was laid down an 18 in. cylinder worked by steam, with Fowler's patent clip pulley winding, the corves, along a level 700 yards in length, having three branches. On the second branch there was a train of twelve corves, each containing 7½ cwt. of coal, and on the third a train of thirty-two corves, all travelling along at the rate of fully four miles an hour. There was also a return train of forty-eight corves, worked by means of a double-acting steel rope three-quarters of an inch in thickness, and which went over the entire distance of 700 yards in seven minutes.

This was the first attempt made in introducing the endless ropes, and so highly satisfactory was it deemed by the proprietors and manager that it was determined to have them in the higher seam. For that purpose, as was pointed out by Mr. Platts, a 16 in. diameter air-cylinder was attached to the steam engine, driving the air a distance of about 400 yards to a point where there were a pair of small engines worked by compressed air, which winds by the clip pulley an endless rope along 400 yards of road. To the last-named engines is attached a drum worked by friction gear, winding from two stations, the first being 200 yards on the dip, and the second 350 yards on the dip. A plunger pump, 4 in. in diameter, is worked by the compressed air for raising the water. The machinery was minutely examined by the gentlemen, and all were impressed with the value of the system which, even in an economical point of view alone, was admitted to be highly advantageous. Proceeding to the principal pit, the No. 2 Silkestone, there was an engine of 40-horse power, with two cylinders for drawing the corves along an irregular road of 1,050 yards in length, to the wharf may be termed three gradients, one-third of the distance rising 1 in 30, another third rising about 1 in 7, the remainder being level. At 600 yards from the engine is placed some other machinery, made by Messrs. Fowler, of Leeds, the patentees of the clip-pulley, so arranged as to be capable of pulling the corves from any and every direction required. It is worked in a rather peculiar manner by means of a drum, friction gear, and mitted wheels, and acts admirably.

In addition to the machinery named, Mr. Platts has invented a moveable pulley, which being fixed near to the clip, always keeps the ropes tight. The various ropes and machinery, and the mode of working, were minutely examined by the party, all of whom were practical men, and who were unanimous in their opinion that the endless ropes draw the corves quicker and more economically than could be done by horse-power. So satisfactory have been the trials made, that at several collieries already the steel ropes are about to be put down, whilst their general adoption throughout South Yorkshire, as well as in other colliery districts, appears likely to be accomplished at no distant period, as the more closely the system is examined, the more strongly will it commend itself to the notice of those interested.

LOCK OF KING THEODORE'S HAIR.—A lock of the late King Theodore's hair, cut from his head after death by Captain C. F. James, Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General, has been received in Plymouth, and as a matter of curiosity was exhibited in a shop-window in George-street. Captain James, when about to start for Abyssinia, jocularly promised a friend at Plymouth that he would bring back a lock of Theodore's hair. The pledge was redeemed, a note accompanying it, in which Captain James said, "I send you a real lock of King Theodore's hair. I cut it off myself as soon as we found his body in the gateway, and I assure you it is genuine. I little thought when I promised this in fun that it would be fulfilled in reality."



[NOLAN'S NURSE.]

ELLEN LAMBERT'S TWENTY YEARS.

BY M. T. CALDOR.

CHAPTER XX.

WHERE were Nina, Bella, and Nolan? Well might Ruth begin to question this, with anxious glances towards the fire.

It was not until after many an unavailing journey out into the street, that faithful, unselfish Ruth was rewarded by seeing the waggonette returning. It moved so very slowly, she knew in a moment Nolan's injured limb was again disturbing him. But she did not understand half the trouble, though she met Nina's white, set face at the gateway, until she looked into the waggonette, where Nolan was lying, stretched out upon a straw bed which someone's humanity had provided.

His face was deadly pale at the lips and forehead, but the cheeks were fiery red, and the eyes glassy and bright, and met hers with a fierce, unmeaning stare. His hands were tied before him.

"For the love of heaven, Nina!" ejaculated Ruth, "what does this mean?"

Nina's lips vainly essayed an answer, as she stood leaning against the gate-post, quite unable to stand without its support.

"Oh, dear!" said Bella, drearily, and half angrily, "can't you see, Ruth? Nolan has become delirious, and I don't wonder at it. It is more than any one can bear. How shall we ever get him out? He is so furious, and will not hear any of us."

"Now may heaven send us help out of this!" said Ruth, looking at Nina's poor white face.

And then the noble, faithful creature rallied herself, forgetting her night of ceaseless activity, and her own aches, and weakness.

"It will pass away when he can be placed comfortably. Nina, my lamb, you're worn out. Come in and lie down. There's two beds up, thank goodness! And there's some hot tea will put new life into you. Please, sir," turning to the man who had driven the horse, "be so good as to wait a bit, and leave him on the bed there, till I can tend to him, which won't be long."

And turning, Ruth fairly lifted Nina in her arms, carried her into the house, and put her on the bed, all the while croning over her such old, fond foolish talk as she had used when they were all little children, and had coaxed for Ruth's lullabies to put them to sleep.

"Bless you, my lamb. This storm is too much for you. You've fallen under it, after facing all the rest so bravely. Cheer up, sweet darling! Ruth isn't going to see harm come to you. Ruth will look after things. And heaven is over all, my innocent lamb, don't forget that! See what has been done this night!"

"Oh, Ruth!" burst forth Nina.

And the pent-up flood of tears found vent.

"My darling, my pride, my treasure! You're worn out. Things will be brighter, by-and-bye, they will look so different after you've had a sleep. There, there! Now you're going to drink this warm tea, and it will do you a world of good, and then when you're able, you must go in and take a look at your father and mother. Oh, it will do your sore heart good. We've got him back, Nina. I haven't a doubt but we shall have him like his old self, and the mistress is so happy. Nina, sweet, there's comfort in all this trouble!"

"There is, there is," sobbed Nina. "Oh, Ruth, it's wicked in me to murmur, while you are left to us."

She sat up, pushed back the disordered curls with her two trembling hands, wiped her drenched face, and drank the tea with feverish eagerness.

"Now I am better, Ruth. I will help you with Nolan. He must come to this bed, must he not? How have you been able to prepare such a home-like place?"

"The people are not all Hottentots and cannibals," answered Ruth; "they have sent enough to keep us comfortable for a day or two. Here's an easy-chair and a blanket. I don't know but you might as well take that, and if you're sure you're all right, I'll go out and see to Nolan, but you mustn't stir."

Nina's sinking limbs warned her of the prudence of yielding. She sat down in the easy-chair, and closed her eyes, trying to perform that impossible task, to stop thinking.

Meanwhile Ruth hurried out to the gateway. Poor Nolan was shouting and vociferating wildly, believing that some one had chained him down in a burning house.

"Undo his hands! oh, undo his hands!" implored Bella. "Nolan, dear Nolan, can't you see that I am here, and Ruth is here. If you will only be quiet, you shall be free from the handkerchief."

"I know who it is. It is Madame Lambert. Don't you think I know those evil eyes under any disguise? She has come, to feast herself with the sight of my torture. Away, away, I say!" shrieked Nolan.

"He would hurt himself if you left him untied," said the sympathizing neighbour, "and that ankle

of his is bad enough now. It has grown larger and larger, swelling as fast as anything I ever saw."

"It is the pain that makes his mind astray. I must find something to put on there, and we must have a doctor."

"The young lady sent for one," returned the man, "and my boy carried a message for her to the hotel."

"Thank goodness! If that noble lady will come and help us now, she will do an angel's work," muttered Ruth, "and where's Mr. Forsay? He's not the man I thought him, if he doesn't come to poor Nolan, as soon as he hears of this."

At last, but not without much trouble and anxiety, they transferred the poor youth on to the bed. Ruth's indefatigable hands had soothed the inflamed limb with cold bandages, and presently he went off to sleep. Then she looked over the closet, coaxed Bella to take a cup of tea and something to eat, and presently to lie down on the rude couch. Nina was already asleep. Exhausted and worn out, even her sorrow could not keep her wakeful. The gray morning stealing in upon them made the candles look wan and spectral. Ruth put them out, drew up a hard wooden chair close to Nolan's bed, and sat down in it.

"Dear heart! dear heart!" she murmured, "little enough I thought when I raked out the fire last evening at the dear old house, what sort of a morning this would be! Oh! it's all gone, the old house, and the old china, and the bit of silver I was so proud of, the piano, and the guitar—and—oh, it's enough to break my heart to think of it all. Not a spoon left, not even the dozen we kept so choicely with the Lambert crest, and name on them, as the dear grandmother left them. And here are the Claxtons in a poor cottager's house, half decent for common folks, let alone quality like them—without clothes, without money. Oh, Lord forgive me! it is enough to make one long to rush over to Graylope, and strangle that horrible woman, there in the midst of the riches that belong to them more than to her."

And then Ruth drew the coverlet carefully over Nolan, glanced around at the sleeping girls, yawned and nodded, and began to be aware that her limbs ached, and that she herself was tired out.

How long she slept she did not know, but when she opened her eyes the cheery sunshine was pouring in through the uncurtained windows, and her chair had been carefully drawn away from Nolan's bed, and a shawl was around her shoulders; Nina and the doctor were bending over Nolan who, still asleep, was tossing restlessly from side to side and groaning heavily.

She sprang up hastily, as if she had been guilty of some great indiscretion.

"Dear, dear, Miss Nina! How could you let me sleep all this time?" exclaimed she, for Ruth was very particular before strangers to give her young ladies all proper tokens of respect. "To think of me sleeping, and you up and looking after things. How is dear Mr. Nolan?"

"Sit still, Ruth, I am sure if any one needs rest, it is you."

But Ruth had no idea of resting any longer. She went around at once, like a good general, taking in the condition of all her resources, and the amount of work before her.

In the first place, was there any coffee? A good cup would be the best breakfast for all of them, she knew, and without it a table, however well spread, would be unappreciated. She set on the tea kettle, and went rummaging over the parcels.

No, not a particle of coffee. Alack! It was unfortunate enough. Such a little thing would depress their spirits on a morning like this. Coffee must be had somehow. Ruth had not heard much about foraging raids, but the very spirit of one was in her heart, as she put her shawl over her head, dimly querying if there were a head covering of any sort in possession of the family.

Coffee Ruth was determined to have, though she had very vague ideas of how it was to be obtained. She just looked in, to see that the master and mistress were still sleeping, making up for their disturbed night, and glided out. She made her way boldly into the first shop, which contained the article she sought, after her rapid walk brought her into the populous portion of the town.

"I want a package of your best coffee," said Ruth. "It's for my mistress, Mrs. Claxton, who, as you may know, was burnt out last night of everything in the world. Moreover, you know that some time or other she will have plenty of money of her own, though she was unfortunate enough to have all her Bank of England notes burnt last night in the fire. I haven't any money with me, but if you are afraid to give credit to the Claxtons, here's something will pay for what I ask of you."

And Ruth, very hot and uncomfortable in making this speech as hastily as possible, pulled off the plain gold ring from her finger, and laid it on the counter.

Faithful, heroic Ruth! The ring was the gift of a sailor lover, the only soul in the world, except the Claxtons, who had found beauty in her plain, homely face and dull-coloured eyes. He had gone down, years and years ago, in the strange, mystical tropic seas, which had such a vague fascination, and such a black horror for her not remarkably active imagination.

Nobody in the world knew or guessed all that that ring was to her, the one link to the solitary romance of her girlhood. But she laid it down there on the counter, that her dear mistress might not miss her accustomed morning beverage. Faithful, heroic Ruth!

The man looked at her a moment, and pushed back the ring, saying, laconically:

"I don't mind giving credit this time. Is there anything else you want?"

Ruth snatched up the ring, and murmured a smothered exclamation of thanksgiving. Then she dashed off the drops of moisture clinging to her eyelashes and returned to her usual cool, matter-of-fact manner.

Yes, there certainly were other things. Arrow-root, farina, and a dozen such luxuries that would be necessities, if Nolan were going to have a fever. With a reckless determination to improve the opportunity, Ruth called off the list. The man put them up.

"I'll take the bill of them, if you please," said Ruth, mindful of the Claxton dignity, "and if the money comes to us we expect, I'll come in, and pay it."

"No great hurry about it. We are always willing to give credit once," answered the man, and considered that he had managed shrewdly, for he had saved his credit, in case the Claxtons came speedily into the Lambert property, and he felt certain there would be no second attempt to obtain goods without the cash accompanied them.

Ruth went back at a pace which would have done credit to younger and nimbler limbs. They had scarcely been aware of her absence at the cottage. Bella, dreary and forlorn, was pacing the room outside that in which Nolan was muttering and groaning.

"Is your mother up?" asked Ruth.

"No, they are asleep. Thank heaven they can sleep, when there is nothing but misery and trouble at the waking."

"Keep up heart, dear lamb. We'll weather this cruel storm somehow," said Ruth. "I'll have some coffee presently."

"How can I keep heart under all this?" demanded Bella, almost angrily.

"You must try, for the sake of the rest."

"If I were only of some use, like you and Nina," returned the girl, her proud lip quivering, "it would be different, but I am not, and I know it. And I can't help it, that is the worst of it."

"You will help us, best of all, by keeping as cheerful as you can. That would be a great deal, dear child. And you can sit by Nolan's bed. Indeed you can do a great deal for us," answered Ruth, soothingly.

"If only Miss Davonal would come," sighed Bella.

Ruth could not waste time in talking. She went into the room where the fire was burning, and presently the rich aroma of the coffee was stealing through the house, penetrating into Mrs. Claxton's room, rousing that lady, who slipped softly out of bed, dressed herself in the only clothing lying by the couch, and astonished the rest of the family by walking into upon them.

Ruth brought forward the easiest chair, well blanketed, and took care to close the door into her bedroom, so that Nolan's moans should not reach her ear.

"My children, Ruth, they are all here? It was shameful in me to sleep so long, and leave everything to the rest of you," said the little woman.

"Yes, they are all here. How do you find yourself, dear Mrs. Claxton?" said Ruth, bringing a cup of coffee and a slice of toast to her chair.

She drank the coffee, but only trifled with the toast. It was plain she had no appetite, and her face was woefully pale, but Ruth discovered, when she took the cup away, that her hands were dry and hot.

"You're not very well this morning," said the faithful creature, watching her with a sickening distress in her heart.

"A little tired, I believe. Are the children all asleep still? They are none of them ill?"

"We shall all be better to-morrow; it was a hard night. How is the master?"

"Oh, Ruth, I don't know—he is asleep. I am such a coward I dared not disturb him. Will he waken as he went to sleep, or will he go back to what he was? Ruth, Ruth, that is what I have been trembling about."

"We must let him sleep as long as possible. Perhaps it would be well to ask the doctor about it. He is in the bedroom there."

"The doctor! for whom? Oh, Ruth, one of my children was hurt—is ill! you must not deceive me. I will go in and see."

"I wouldn't, please, dear, dear Mrs. Claxton. It is only Nolan's ankle. He hurt it again, and he was asleep, and you might disturb him."

For Ruth knew too well what a frail tenement held the beautiful spirit of her mistress, and she trembled lest the shock of beholding Nolan in his delirium might aggravate the feverish nervousness which already rasped and wore upon the delicate organization. At that moment Floy came in, and ran with childish eagerness for her mother's kiss, but crying softly all the time. She was pressed fondly to the loving breast, and then her hands and cheeks carefully examined.

"Why, Ruth, the child is hot and feverish. And do you hear her breath rattle? She has taken a violent cold. She will need attention."

Ruth came to the investigation with a new terror, but she spoke cheerfully.

"I don't know but we'll want a doctor apiece, but who will pay the bills, I wonder? I must hunt up some herbs somewhere, and give her some tea. She'll be all right when she's in a warm bed, won't you, Floy?"

Mrs. Claxton looked around the room for the first time with a wistful glance, but she said nothing.

"Get a blanket and wrap around Floy, and I'll take her in my arms," said she.

Ruth obeyed, and went off to hear the report from Nolan. There was no question about his case. He was in a high fever. The doctor was still giving instructions to Nina, casting many a compassionate glance into the pale, sorrowful face.

Bella had left off her dreary pacing without, and taken her seat by the bedside.

When Ruth took the doctor, to look at Floy, Bella gently pushed Nina away.

"There is some coffee, Nina, go and get some. I can stay and watch him, and if he stirs or moves I will call you at once. It is very little for me to do, and it is all I am good for."

Nina stooped down, and kissed her. Humility was something so new for Bella.

"Dear sister, we have all our part to perform, and if we will all try to do it faithfully," she said, "heaven surely will sustain us."

And most fervently did poor Nina appeal for that needed strength from heaven, when she went into the little kitchen, and found her mother looking pale and so very, very fragile, bending over Floy with anxious and sorrowful solicitude.

"Mamma, darling mamma," said Nina, stooping down to kiss the blue-veined forehead, "do not look so sorrowful, or you will break my heart."

"I did not mean it, dear," answered Mrs. Claxton. "I am a little anxious about Floy. She has taken cold, and her breathing is very distressing. The doctor agrees with me, that she will need close watching towards night."

Nina looked at Floy, who, rapidly yielding to the oppression which weighed upon her chest, had, child-like, the moment she found herself with her mother, revealed all her distress, and then went away silently and took her coffee, swallowing desperately against the hysterical choking in her throat.

She stood a moment in the little entry alone, fighting against the almost uncontrollable impulse to give way to a wild burst of grief, but came back grave and steady.

"Now, mamma, I will take Floy, and rock her carefully. She is too heavy for you. Perhaps you had better look at my father. Ruth tells me it is uncertain how he is this morning."

"Oh, Nina, pray with me that he may wake restored to us," repeated Mrs. Claxton, almost piteously, as she relinquished Floy, and rose from the chair, to obey Nina's suggestion.

Nina's eloquent eye responded, though the quivering lip could not articulate a word.

Mrs. Claxton still slept, a profound, stirless slumber, which one after another of the household went anxiously to watch. Throughout the entire day he remained thus, the breathing deep, calm, quiet as a child's, and the limbs motionless, not so much as stirring a single member.

They began to feel intense solicitude, not more on his account than for Mrs. Claxton's sake. She was so nervous and agitated, the suspense wore upon her so frightfully, poor Ruth was half inclined to risk a sudden wakening of the sleeper, rather than subject her to farther trial.

It diverted her mind to be allowed to help Floy a little, and when Nolan had fallen into a doze, after a fit of wild raving, Nina took her mother in to look at him.

The fair, frail, still beautiful woman, with her soft curly hair bleached by grief to its premature silver, stood looking upon the sick youth with wistful, pitying eyes.

"Nina, my brave darling," said she, turning suddenly to her daughter, who was softly bathing the hot forehead, "this is the fiercest storm that has yet beat upon us. If your father wakes rational and restored, I shall take heart, and believe it is the breaking up of our troubles. And if he does not—"

"Oh, mamma, don't," exclaimed Nina, shrinking from the weary look of utter dejection which came into the beloved face.

"If he do not, my child, I shall think it is hopeless to struggle any longer. I shall believe that Ellen Lambert's wicked will will have its way, and pray to be taken away as soon as possible. It might be—it might be," she repeated wistfully, "if I were gone, she might be satisfied, and leave the rest of you in peace."

Nina came around, and flung her arms about the frail, slender little figure.

"Mamma, mamma, you must not lose courage, you must not wish, or be willing to die. Think of us, all you are to us, and what the world would be without you. Rouse yourself," she cried, almost frantic with the belief that the sorely-tried soul was longing for escape, and knowing, alas! how very feeble was the cord which held it to the earth, she trembled lest the very longing should achieve the result.

Mrs. Claxton returned the caress, and dropped her head with a restful sigh upon Nina's shoulder.

"My own brave-hearted, noble daughter," murmured she, "if I have had other troubles, I have been doubly blessed in my children. Only heaven can see all that you and Nolan have been to us during our woful trials. And Guy—poor Guy—I cannot blame him, even now when his help and support would be so much to us. We know he struggled manfully in the beginning, dear Nina; if we ever find Guy again, we must not be harsh with him."

"Yes, yes; far be it from me to give him a single accusing word, though I may, and must, resent his cowardice and selfishness. And, now, mamma, you will keep up your courage and good heart; promise me that. It will be such a comfort and support to me."

"Dear, unselfish darling! your own approving conscience should be support enough! What would become of us here but for you and Ruth? Now Nolan is ill, you are the real head and staff of the

family. And so young and tender. Oh, my poor Nina, it is cruel for you!"

"Not if you promise to be cheerful and hopeful," persisted Nina.

"I do; I will, indeed I will, my precious one."

Nina let her go back to her watch in her husband's chamber, and sat down, and when Nolan woke, raving wildly, insisting upon rising from the bed, she held him back, coaxed another sleeping powder into the dry, parched mouth, and as he fell back, worn out and exhausted, she untied the strappings which held the wounded limb from harm, moistened the bandages, and was ready, when Bella came in to say Ruth wanted her, to respond to the summons.

It was a domestic consultation to which she was called. Ruth, who was a perfect housekeeper, while she hid it from observation, fidgeted under the poverty-stricken surroundings.

"Miss Nina, have you a single shilling in your pocket? There must be a curtain of some sort to keep out the glaring sun from this room, and the one where Nolan is lying. Would you mind my going up to Miss Davenal for a little help?"

"Dear Ruth, I have not a single farthing. My pocket-book was in the secretaire, and that money Miss Davenal so generously bestowed upon us was with it. It seems hard for us to call upon her again, but I am sure she will be glad to help us. I sent to her this morning, and I have been looking every moment, expecting to see her come."

"As I have been watching for Mr. Forsay," said Ruth, shortly. "Summer friends! summer friends!"

"Now you are unkind, Ruth," returned Nina, gently. "Mr. Forsay first came with a trouble. You remember he brought Nolan home after the accident. Perhaps he has not heard of it."

"I don't believe there's a soul in the town hasn't heard of it before this, Miss Nina," returned Ruth, indignantly.

"Perhaps he is hindered from coming by business or accident. I prefer to believe it is either, rather than accuse such generous friends of voluntary desertion. But I shall be glad to have you go to Miss Davenal, if you are not too tired, poor Ruth. Don't you remember Dixon came to know if she spent the night here? No, not here, but in the dear old house that is gone. When was it? It was only yesterday morning, but it seems like a dozen years ago. He seemed surprised, and I have been a little anxious ever since."

Ruth went as swiftly as her tired limbs would take her, and came back with a woful face.

"Oh, Miss Nina, the good, kind, beautiful lady is missing, and they are much alarmed about her."

"Who is missing?" asked Bella, in that dreary, apathetic manner of hers.

"Miss Davenal, the friend I thought would rescue us from our troubles," answered Ruth; "they fear something has happened to her."

"What are they doing?" asked Nina, quickly.

"They do not know what to do. But a young gentleman who has done Miss Davenal good service before, Dixon says, came to see her, and, finding what had happened, promised to look for her everywhere."

"Lord Windermere!" ejaculated Bella. "Oh, Nina, what shall I do if he comes here to see us?"

"He has gone, whoever he was, in search of Miss Davenal," continued Ruth, mournfully. "And that isn't the worst of the story I have to tell."

Nina's head had been bent down over her sleeping brother. She raised it now hastily, and said, in a voice that was almost stern in its calmness:

"It is about Mr. Forsay, Ruth; tell us what you have heard."

"He went away yesterday, to be absent a long time. He left word with Miss Davenal, in a note for her, to give his regards to the Claxtons, and that he should miss the musical evenings."

"Miss Davenal missing—Mr. Forsay away on a journey! the only two friends we have to give us help!" ejaculated Nina in a low, broken voice, and she dropped her face on Nolan's pillow.

Oh, how hard it was to keep herself the cheerful hope she had instilled into her mother! Ruth looked at her a moment, and choking back a dry sob walked swiftly out of the room. The prospect in the other apartment was scarcely less disheartening. Mrs. Claxton, with those dark circles under her eyes, which were painfully brilliant with her pale cheeks and lips, and hands clasped against her side, was sitting between the two dear sleepers. Floy's hoarse breathing filled the room. Mr. Claxton's slumber was like that of an infant.

"I'll try one other chance," muttered Ruth, "that queer old fellow, that Mat Rigby has done me many a good turn, though I never could understand it. It is ridiculous to think he had any notions—a poor old body like him, of a homely servant-woman like me, but it's the truth, he's made me take a present of money many a time, and I, who knew it was

needed, made bold to take it. I'll go and tell him our luck now, for heaven knows, it's bad enough. There's not a change of clothes for one of us but the dear, sweet mistress. Something must be done."

And after she had attended to the simple repast, Ruth's indefatigable feet turned again towards the town.

She came back angry and excited, muttering:

"It's a plot! I say it's a plot. Those as would help us, every soul, is away and gone, nobody knows where. Oh, that Jezebell! She means to wreak her vengeance more swiftly. But she shan't! she shan't! I alone will fight her, inch by inch. Oh, if the master will only recover! There's the land the burnt house stood on. It will bring something. I'll sell the ring, I'll sell the clothes off my back. I'll beg. I'll—yes I will, I'll steal, but we will all weather this through."

And Ruth burst out into a hearty fit of crying.

CHAPTER XXI.

SIR GALAHAD searched Lemington, as he thought, with the utmost thoroughness. Coming so promptly, he was able to learn what little there was to be told, without any hesitancy on account of careless or treacherous memory, on the part of those who could give him information.

The station-master at Lemington was very positive in recalling the arrival of such a person, a tall, slim woman in a gray dress and Rob Roy shawl, with a veil drawn closely over her face. He remembered, likewise, that another woman in mourning met her, spoke a few words to her, and the two walked away together.

He was inclined to think, although not so positive, that the same person came back in the afternoon, and took the return train.

Another man, a porter, gave his testimony that a woman in gray with a Rob Roy shawl, closely veiled, took the next morning train, and bought a ticket for the great manufacturing town of the shire.

The young man accepted the first part of the testimony, and taking it for granted that Miss Davenal was in Lemington, went to work as systematically as he was able with the help of a detective, and soon ascertained that the lady, if anywhere within the town, was sequestered.

No one could give any information concerning such a person.

It was rather unfortunate for poor Miss Davenal that she had selected so common a colour. No one thought of noticing particularly a lady in plain gray. If it had been some brilliant colour, or expensive dress, the fact might have arrested their attention. Leaving his secret agent to keep watch in Lemington, Sir Galahad went on to the metropolis. The young man's means were by no means large, but he went promptly to one of the most famous detectives, and stated the particulars of the case to him.

"I am poor," said he, "but the lady is wealthy, and if you can succeed in finding her, there is no doubt but you will receive whatever reward you may state now, as your required fee."

The detective asked him to repeat to him again the whole history, and every circumstance connected with the case.

His visitor complied.

"So then your whole authority for supposing that the young lady has come to harm rests upon this fact, that she has not returned to the hotel, and that you heard this singular call, which, by the way, nine out of ten would pronounce an hallucination of your imagination. By your own account she is a very eccentric person—how are you at all sure she has not returned before this?" said the detective, meditatively.

For answer the young man laid before him a letter directed to Philip Phillips, mailed from Dover, and bearing the previous day's date.

Miss Davenal's servants were still in great grief and alarm. Not the slightest communication had been received from her.

Dixon wrote imploring for her friend to take more energetic measures.

Upon which the detective knit his brows, and tapped absently upon the table before him with his forefinger.

"Dover is a queer place. There is an old friend of mine just arrived from that same tantalizing little place, and he has been telling me an odd episode of his own. I must look into it. I must look into it."

While he was speaking, there was a knock at his door.

"Come in, come in," said the detective, and as the door unclosed, and revealed the person of the intruder, he rose from his chair with a genial smile. "Ah, here he is. I'm right glad to see you, Kent Forsay. Between you both, I shall be able to get a peep at the mysteries of Dover. Mr. Phillips, Mr. Forsay," he added, perceiving that there was no

signal of recognition between the gentlemen. "I thought you might have made acquaintance in Dover."

Kent Forsay held out his hand with a genial smile, dimly impressed that he had somewhere seen a face with a lineament, or expression, like that of the grave, steady countenance before him.

Mr. Phillips took the proffered hand in a momentary careless clasp, and then dropped it.

Mr. Forsay was somehow sensible of a chill and a regret, for he had been strongly attracted towards the stranger.

"In Dover," said he, "why where have you hidden yourself, Mr. Phillips, that I have never met you?"

"I did not say that I belonged there. I only mentioned to this gentleman that I came from there," replied the other.

"And the pair of you expect I have been keen enough to see through these mysteries?"

Kent Forsay laughed carelessly.

"Well, Burton, I remember you of old, and you always had the knack of settling the gloomiest and most muddy mysticisms, as well as the keenest eye to discover a ray of light in the most forlorn hope. I only wanted to see if you could sniff the villain in this case. I did not expect you to take it up, or trouble yourself about it."

"But this gentleman wishes me to do both for him, though it is a young lady, instead of a draft, which is missing," pursued the detective.

Kent Forsay opened his eyes in astonishment, as he repeated:

"A young lady missing. And from Dover? I wonder I did not hear about it before I left."

"What was the date of her disappearance?" questioned Burton.

Mr. Phillips gave it.

"The very day I left," exclaimed Kent. "Who knows but she was in the train with me? What sort of a looking person was she?"

Mr. Phillips sat gnawing impatiently at a very white and nervous lip.

"She was very beautiful according to his account," answered the detective, furtively watching his unknown visitor's face, "and her name was Carmine Davenal."

"Miss Davenal!" exclaimed Kent Forsay, springing to his feet. "Miss Davenal missing! How? When? Where?"

"That is precisely what I have come for Mr. Burton to help me in discovering," answered Mr. Phillips, still rather pale, but forcing his voice to be composed.

"What, is she an acquaintance of yours, Forsay?"

"She is a wonderful woman, talented, noble, and good, as well as wealthy, and inimitably attractive. And she is missing. Tell me about it, I beg, of you."

Mr. Phillips left the detective to tell the story, and sat nervously fingering a pen which lay on the table beside him.

Kent Forsay was of course extremely anxious as well as interested. He turned at once to the other, and held out his hand.

"And you also are a friend of Miss Davenal's? You must let me help you in this search. I understand now, why I did not recognize you as a resident of Dover. You only came to see Miss Davenal."

"Yes, I—I went to see Miss Davenal, and I found her missing. She is so singularly situated, as regards relatives, it seemed to me it was my place to seek her. Is there anything you know which can throw any light upon this strange absence?" returned Mr. Phillips, still, it seemed to Kent, a little distrustfully.

"Nothing whatever. She told me very little about herself, except that she was alone, with no one to hinder her movements, which certainly, did look eccentric until you came to know her."

"She was not like an insane person, was she?" asked the detective.

Both young gentlemen shook their heads with an indignant glance.

"I wonder," said Kent Forsay, meditatively, "if sweet little Nina Claxton could not help? I know how much Miss Davenal admired and respected her, and I am certain if she gave her confidence to anyone it would be to Nina. Do you know the Claxtons? Have you been to them?"

"Dixon and the waiting-maid had both made inquiries there, but without any satisfaction," replied Mr. Phillips.

"And you tell me there is only one person upon whom you can fix the most vague suspicion," asked the detective.

"Only one. Varimont certainly knew Miss Davenal, for he tried to hire some one to spy upon her."

"Varimont!" again ejaculated Kent Forsay; "upon my word, Phillips, you and I are upon the same track. That man is an ugly customer, do you know much about him?"

"As much, perhaps as he would care to have me know. But he is still there in Dover, and was there all the time of Miss Davenal's disappearance, which disturbs my theory considerably. In fact, I am utterly puzzled. Of one thing only I am confident, and that is, that Miss Davenal is in trouble, and needs help."

"And the matter must be looked into with all possible speed. Burton, sharpen up your wits. This is my affair also," returned Kent Forsay, speaking with increased earnestness.

(To be continued.)

THE WITCH FINDER.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THOUGH jovial as Trueaxe had appeared at breakfast, in the deserted house, while occupied with Bruno and Tabby, a look of care and uneasiness soon displayed itself upon his rugged features.

"Tell you what," said he, "the natural man is born to sorrow. 'Twere useless, as the poet says, to expect to sail a summer sea continually."

"But what course will events take, Corporal Trueaxe?" demanded our hero. "Do you think that Boardbush will actually track us to this house?"

"He'd have tracked us here already by our foot-marks, if the snow hadn't covered them."

"In that case," observed Philip, thoughtfully, "we ought to prepare a surprise for him. He will probably pursue his plans secretly, for the reason we have heretofore mentioned, and is quite likely, if he comes there at all, during the day, to be alone. Should he do so, wouldn't it be a good plan to seize him, take him prisoner, bind him hand and foot, if necessary, and stow him away in the cellar, until after we have gone our several ways?"

"What a glorious idea!" exclaimed Trueaxe, springing excitedly to his feet. "Only he and Miss Temperance know anything about your arrival in Salem. Once hide the villain, and that girl Stoughton'll be of no more account than a one-pronged fork."

"It is settled, then," declared Philip, arising. "We know that the couple in question are plotting against us. In their desperation they are likely to do us a great injury. We must protect ourselves by a prompt and resolute step, if an opportunity be offered us. The Witch Finder seized, Miss Stoughton will remain quiet. Our first attention must be given to our weapons. We'll next prepare this room for a visit, leaving a candle burning, the front door unlocked, the snow cleared away from the steps, and all these signs of occupancy, just as you see them."

"Exactly," said Trueaxe, his features glowing with enthusiasm, "and next we'll form our order of battle. The ladies, with the bear and the cat, shall occupy the kitchen. Captain Ross shall plant himself close to the hall in the other room, in readiness to pounce on the Witch Finder the minute he sticks his nose into the doorway!"

The fugitives at once commenced their preparations. They were all calm and hopeful, despite their perils. They hastened their task, for their thoughts of the pursuer had promptly led them to a conviction that he would appear at an early hour of the morning.

The corporal, who had cleared the snow from the door and returned, commenced laughing immoderately.

"You are merry, Corporal Trueaxe," observed Philip. "What ails you?"

"Why, it has just occurred to me that I have an ash-vault in the cellar, built of stone and mortar, and big enough to hold an elephant. It likewise occurred to me how Boardbush would look, after being there a few hours prowling in the ashes!"

"Is there a door to the vault?"

"Yes, and a key to the door. There's an ash-hole at the bottom, and a flue at the top, so that there's plenty of air."

"Then it's just the place for the prisoner, if we get him."

The preparations for the expected visit were soon completed, and the fugitives disposed of themselves in their several places, according to the old soldier's programme.

"You must leave him to me, unless I call for assistance," said our hero to Trueaxe. "He is a giant in strength, well armed, and desperate; but I think he can be managed."

"Haden't we better all rush in upon him together?"

"No; for he probably has a knife, and would lay about him savagely—the more especially as he knows that Mr. Waybrook and I are still as weak as a couple of kittens. Leave him to me."

At last he was seen approaching. In an instant they were at their posts, and all became still in the dwelling.

We have seen how the eager pursuer burst into the sitting-room, thinking that the fugitives had fled

from their temporary shelter, and how a creaking of the floor in the hall had caused him to suspect that a trap had been set for him.

The consciousness of his peril had dawned upon Boardbush too late.

A man had suddenly emerged into the hall from the room at the opposite end of the house, locked the outer door, securing the key, and passed on towards the sitting-room, just in time to intercept the Witch Finder at the door leading from the hall to the latter apartment.

This man was Philip.

"Good morning, Mr. Boardbush," said he, with a quiet smile; "how do you do?"

The look of consternation that appeared on the Witch Finder's features, on hearing this salutation, was something that defies description.

Without a word, a thought, or even a sentiment of what he was doing, the startled villain drew, levelled and fired one of his immense pistols; the ball entered the door-post, behind which Philip, by a timely movement, had taken shelter.

"A bad shot, that," commented the young navigator, carelessly, as he placed himself in the doorway. "You were evidently excited. Another thing, those clumsy old pistols are very difficult to manage. What a noise it made, too! Fortunately, none of our neighbours are passing the house at this moment, or their belief that it is haunted would be greatly strengthened!"

These observations displayed so much coolness, such a sense of power, such a perfect contempt for all Boardbush had done or could do, that the intruder was instantly disconcerted. His under jaw dropped, he became deathly pale, and his stalwart frame trembled.

"I—I missed you," he stammered.

"Yes; but you need not be astonished at that," rejoined Philip, smiling. "It has been calculated by competent parties, that only one bullet in seven hundred does any injury on a field of battle. It has been farther shown by carefully kept statistics, that only one shot in three hundred and seventy-eight proves fatal in assaults of this nature, street quarrels and the like. You see, therefore, that it would have been a wonder if you had hit me."

The Witch Finder gasped for breath.

"The truth is," pursued Philip, "it's not so easy to shoot a man as some folks imagine. The statistics tell us, to begin with, that our firearms, taking them as they average, miss fire thirty-three times in every hundred. This proportion does not apply, of course, to weapons in constant use—as in actual war, for instance—but to the arms we keep loaded around us, on our persons, in the corners of our rooms, and hanging against our walls in time of peace. Of the shots that take effect eighty-nine in every hundred produce mere flesh wounds. Of the shots instantly fatal, there are only two in five thousand."

The fingers of Boardbush opened and closed upon the handle of his discharged pistol, which hung dangling at his side, in a way which showed that these statistics had convinced him that it was nearly worthless, and that he had been foolish to try to shoot Philip with it.

"Why, to confine myself to my own experience," continued our hero, "I can give you overwhelming proofs of the propositions I have just submitted. At different times, and particularly during our Indian skirmishes, I have certainly been shot at more than thirty times, and all I have to show for it is one slight scratch. To quote a recent example, your man fired at me three or four times in Liverpool, and yet I came off uninjured."

"My man?" gasped Boardbush, becoming as red as a lobster, and dropping his discharged pistol, as if convinced that it was good for nothing.

"Yes, the man you sent off in the Harbinger to kill me, your Ruell."

The Witch Finder shook like an aspen at the mention of this name.

It was the first news he had had of his hired assassin, and it was enough to kill him to hear—not only that his murderous purpose had been unveiled to Philip, but that Ruell had made a complete failure of the whole project.

"But don't get excited over these statistics," proceeded our hero, as Boardbush rolled his eyes helplessly, and seemed to be suffocating. "Your mistake is quite natural. We are all taught in childhood by our mothers and nurses that a fire-arm is the most dangerous thing in existence, and we do not out-grow the error till we have left the days of our happy innocence behind us. The custom here, for instance, is to load our rusty old pieces, and let them remain so three or six months, until we want to shoot a cat, by which time the charge is as likely to leave by the breach of the weapon as by the muzzle. But enough of this. Take a chair, Mr. Boardbush, and we will proceed to business!"

The Witch Finder made a resolute effort to control his emotions.

"Business?" he repeated, with a tremour of anxiety. "I have no business with you!"

"You don't mean to say that you are here without any purpose? You must have had some motive in coming."

A brilliant idea struck the intruder. His pinched and scared look commenced leaving his features.

"Ah, yes, exactly," he stammered. "I—I'm here to see Mr. Trueaxe!"

On hearing the report of the intruder's pistol, the old corporal had emerged into the hall, and Mr. Waybrook had partially opened the door between the sitting-room and the kitchen.

"Mr. Trueaxe is not visible at this moment," replied our hero, with his previous quiet manner. "The notice he has pinned against the door does not announce that he is to be seen within."

"No. But if Mr. Trueaxe is not here, nor to be seen with regard to the house he has offered to let, I've nothing more to say, and will take my departure!"

He advanced towards the hall door, waving Philip out of his way, with a pompous gesture, but the young navigator did not move.

"Sorry to appear disobliging, Mr. Boardbush," said he, "but there is, just now, no egress for you in that direction. I have locked the front door since you entered, and put the key in my pocket!"

At this assurance, so full of menace, the Witch Finder again glared wolfishly at his companion.

"You—you have?" he gasped, hoarsely.

"Yes. This is the trap you mentioned. We have caught you!"

Boardbush recoiled again several yards, paling and flushing by turns, and stared at the figure of our hero, thus blocking up his way, as he would have stared at a lion.

"I—I see, it's a little joke," he exclaimed, not knowing what else to say. "You can't be serious," and he tried to assume a smile. "I recognise you now, Captain Ross. I was frightened for a minute, that's a fact—I was all in a tremour, and thinking of ghosts. That's why I fired at you. You'll excuse me. I see now who you are. We've long known each other by sight, although we have never before spoken. How is your health? Glad to see you again in Salem. Suppose you've had some trouble, to judge by your strange arrival among us. Should be glad to talk over matters with you, but really I'm busy this morning, and must defer that pleasure till some other time."

"There is no use in talking, Mr. Boardbush," rejoined Philip, decidedly, "you are arrested!"

"Arrested?" and the face of the Witch Finder became livid. "How dare you talk to me in this manner? Do you forget who I am?" and he expanded his chest pompously. "Are you ignorant of my standing in the community?"

"No, we are duly enlightened on all these points, I believe," answered our hero, carelessly. "The fact is, Mr. Boardbush, we know who and what you are, and that only too well. We have duly reflected that you are the great witch-hunter. We know that you are a great man—in your own estimation—but this fact will not make the slightest difference in the treatment you are about to receive from us. We are all bewitched, you know, according to your doctrine, and you need not be surprised at any enormity of which we may be guilty!"

The Witch Finder raged at this statement. All the wickedness of his nature seemed bursting into action.

"Enough of this folly," he exclaimed, with a furious gesture. "Stand out of my path!"

Philip remained firm. By this time, however, the Witch Finder was in a state of mind approaching frenzy.

"Out of my path, sir!" he shouted. "Give me that key, sir, or open the door. This instant, sir, or I'll shoot you as I would a dog!"

"You are wasting your time and breath, Mr. Boardbush," he remarked, as unmoved and immovable as a mountain of granite. "I have stated the case to you. You have no more chance of leaving this house at present than you have of flying."

"I—I see," he finally stammered—at a loss what course to take in the emergency. "Your late hardships at sea, Captain Ross, have affected your mind—else why should you make this attack upon me? You are out of your senses, sir, and not a responsible being. It would be foolish to quarrel with a man in this melancholy condition. Since you have locked the front door, I—I'll take my leave by the rear entrance, just to spare myself trouble. Good-morning, sir."

He moved in the direction indicated.

"The kitchen door is locked also," declared the young navigator, smilingly. "You cannot find egress in that direction."

The Witch Finder had now become so enraged, so alarmed, that he foamed at the mouth, as he faced about, glaring at his companion.

"Thank fortune! my sword is still left me," he exclaimed, drawing that weapon from its scabbard, "and you shall feel its weight."

"Have a care, Mr. Boardbush," said Philip, taking a stout stick of wood from the hearth—a piece of hickory about as long as a broom-handle. "If you touch me with that thing, I may do you an injury."

He had no time to say more, for Boardbush, his eyes gleaming with a murderous rage, had made a furious lunge at him, which he was obliged to parry. A brief fight ensued, the stick of wood against the sword, but it was apparent to the Witch Finder from its first passages that he had again missed his calculations, he being no match for the quicker and more skillful antagonist. Notwithstanding the great disparity in their arms, Philip had no difficulty in keeping his assailant at a distance, and ere long, assuming the offensive, he disarmed the infuriated man, by a blow on his sword arm, and secured his cumbersome weapon.

"You see now, Mr. Boardbush, where your warlike disposition has led you," said Philip, turning the point of the sword against its late possessor. "You are powerless—a prisoner, as I told you. Have the goodness to be seated, and we will farther discuss the various little facts which concern us! The trouble with you is, Mr. Boardbush," proceeded Philip, taking a chair, "you are behind the age, a dweller in the woods, a man who has omitted to travel. The old tools you have just been flourishing so vainly are relics of the fourteenth century. Those in use in well-informed circles to-day are of another stamp altogether. See here!"

He drew from his breast pocket a small and richly ornamented pistol, which would not have been out of place among those produced by modern ingenuity, and held it up to the view of the prisoner.

"This is a new invention," pursued Philip, "which has just come into use. It will carry a ball through a three-inch plank. Permit me to give you an example of its precision. You see that candle?"

Boardbush assented, with eyes that seemed about to burst from their sockets.

"It burns dimly," added our hero, "and, being within a rod of it, I proceed to snuff it!"

He raised the weapon and fired, and snuffed the candle as neatly as it could have been done with a pair of snuffers.

At this significant exhibition of his enemy's skill, the Witch Finder reeled in his seat, gasping for breath.

"You see," observed Philip, "there is no arm in the world like it. I never carry less than two of them," and he exhibited a second. "Had you really endangered my life, during this interview," he added, with a lightning glance, "your career would have suddenly ended. Excellent, are they not?"

"Very—very," gasped Boardbush. "I—I see, Captain Ross, that you are too much for me. I surrender at discretion. I'm your prisoner, sure enough!"

"Twere useless, as the poet says, to deny it," exclaimed Trueaxe, advancing from his hiding-place. "Come in, ladies—come in, Mr. Waybrook! The great witch-hunter, so long devouring us, is being devoured! Come in, all of you! The show is beginning. Not exactly a show of Daniel in the lion's den, but of the lion in a den of Daniels!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

In an instant the fugitives were in the presence of their pursuer, who shrank against the wall as far as possible from them, with screams of murderous rage and mortification. Into what a horrible trap had he fallen!

"Take it easy, Mr. Witch Finder," enjoined Trueaxe. "Don't turn black over it. Hang me! you look as if you were going to have a peripatetic fit."

The eyes of Boardbush first encountered those of the merchant, who bowed, ironically.

"Happy to see you again, Mr. Boardbush," said he. "You entertained me at your house last evening, and it is fair that I should entertain you to-day. All has been explained to me since our former meeting. My wife has duly enlightened me concerning your character and conduct. I believe you are now rated by us all at your exact value."

The glances of the prisoner next rested upon Hester and her mother, who had taken the chairs advanced for them by Philip, and turned a calm but triumphant regard upon their enemy.

"It is needless to say," declared the maiden, "that we are all happy to see you in your present position."

The prisoner averted his face and eyes, with an internal fury, only to encounter the gaze of Mistress

Peabody, who had remained in the back-ground, attended by Bruno and Tabby.

"You here?" he cried, involuntarily.

"As you see," she replied, with calm assurance. "You were aware of my escape, I suppose? Believe me, Mr. Boardbush, I share the general joy at seeing you—in such close quarters."

"The same from me, Mr. Witch Finder," exclaimed Trueaxe. "Delighted to see you—so near my ash-vault."

"It's a long road, you know, that has no turning in it, Mr. Boardbush," chimed in Mrs. Waybrook, with a quiet satisfaction. "You have now reached a striking turn in yours."

Boardbush glared at the several members of the little party, with the air of a man who is being stung to death by hornets.

It was a terrible blow—to his pride especially—for him to find himself in the power of his enemies, and to perceive, by their calmness, their scorn, that the terror and dread of his name had perished.

"May I inquire what you propose to accomplish by this proceeding?"

"You may, of course," replied Philip. "The simple object we have in view in taking you prisoner, is to protect ourselves from you. The truth is," continued Philip, "you have sworn to force Miss Waybrook into a marriage with you, and to put me out of the way. On the other hand, Miss Stoughton has sworn to marry me, and to rid herself of Miss Waybrook. Hence a plot between you and the judge's niece—a conspiracy, a pursuit, an organized plot, which has made you too obnoxious to be allowed to run at large at the present juncture. In arresting you, we propose to put an end to this scheme and to keep you out of mischief."

"You go at your task boldly, I must say," muttered the prisoner, bitterly.

"It is time for prompt action. In connection with Miss Stoughton, you have chosen to pursue me and the family of my betrothed wife, and have been caught at it. To judge by your appearance, you have been searching for us all night. The instant you found yourself detected, you fired at me, without a word of inquiry; and this fact betrays only too well how conscious you were of your guilty intentions. To seize Hester, to separate her from me, you are quite capable, Mr. Boardbush, of calling a swarm of your fellow witch-hunters around me, and so interfering with the great duty which occupies Mr. Waybrook and myself at this moment. To prevent you from taking this or any other course to our detriment, we have taken the liberty of arresting you. We have returned to Salem for assistance, and the state of the public mind—the reign of this witchcraft delusion, if you prefer the expression—has rendered it politic for us to keep our presence a secret. We do not want your creatures to molest us during the day, or to prevent our departure. You may be sure, however, that we shall do you no injury, beyond depriving you for a sufficient time of your freedom."

The prisoner struggled with his wrathful emotions and assumed an outward calmness.

He reflected that his men were on the watch at the wharves, and elsewhere; that his visit to the deserted house was known to Miss Stoughton; that he had engaged to see her an hour from that time; that she would be likely to look for him; that she was aware of Philip's intended departure; that she was active and daring; and that she was quite capable of setting all to rights before the day ended. These reflections were all promising and cheering.

"It's all right," he repeated. "May I ask what you propose to do with me?"

"Certainly," answered Philip. "To begin, we shall tie your hands very securely behind you, to render your safe-keeping easy."

He produced the necessary cords for this purpose, and proceeded to apply them.

"Next," continued Philip, "we shall stow you away in the cellar."

"Hark!" exclaimed Trueaxe, suddenly excited, raising his hand warningly.

They all listened intently.

Footsteps were again heard approaching the front door.

The prisoner's face brightened satanically.

As quick as thought Philip drew his pistol, cocked it, and aimed it at Boardbush.

"Not a whisper, or you die!" he commanded in that tone which tells a man that he is only a hair's breadth from death. "A hundred and sixty lives, aboard of the Harbinger, are dependent upon my movements, and I will shoot you as I would a viper, the first word you utter!"

The footsteps had ceased at the door.

The little party within the house comprehended that another townsman, happening to pass that way, had noticed the announcement.

A loud knock followed.

The townsman, having read the notice, had be-

come curious. Remarking that the walk had been cleared, he presumed that Trueaxe was within, and resolved, in that case, to speak with him. Hence the knock.

The Witch Finder started, but only to writhe under the fixed and piercing look of our hero, so terrible, so charged with the death it threatened.

The silence within the house remained unbroken, and in another moment the footsteps were heard retreating.

Trueaxe stole to the window and looked out, availing himself, as he had so often done before, of a crack in the shutter.

"He's gone," he added. "He concluded that the owner hadn't taken possession."

The fugitives again breathed freely, and Philip replaced his pistol in his pocket.

"As I was saying, Mr. Boardbush, there are too many persons passing in the street for us to leave you here. The corporal and I will accordingly conduct you to your new lodgings."

Trueaxe lighted another candle at this observation, and led the way to the kitchen. The Witch Finder, glad to escape the regard of his enemies, arose promptly to follow him.

"A nice, cosy place for you, Mr. Witch Finder," declared Trueaxe, flashing his light into the ashy dungeon. "Equal to any tavern in the colony. No charge for attendance. If you want your boots cleaned you can leave them outside the door. Should you want some warm water to shave with, you can speak to the chambermaid. Walk in and take a seat on one of them ashbarrels! If I hear of any robbery or murder in the streets of Salem, during the next few hours, I'll swear that 'taint you!"

The Witch Finder glared helplessly at his tormentor, and turned to Philip.

"And how long will you keep me in this hole?" he demanded.

"That depends upon circumstances," replied our hero reflectively. "At noon when we bring you something to eat, there will be a few papers ready for your signature—"

"Papers?"

"A confession you know. We are aware that Miss Stoughton has been sticking pins into herself, in order to have a good basis for an accusation against Hester and Mrs. Waybrook. We are also aware that you have been conspiring with that woman against us. With the aid of my friends upstairs, I propose to draw up a confession!"

"A confession?" gasped Boardbush, becoming as pallid as the ashes before him.

"Yes, a confession or statement of your wickedness," pursued Philip, "which you will have to sign before you leave this place, and even before you get a mouthful of dinner!"

The old corporal swung his hat against the wall, with a delight of the most intense description. This was the first he had heard of the confession, but he instantly comprehended the value of the project.

"You see what you've come to, Mr. Witch Finder," he ejaculated, thrusting his forefinger into the ribs of the prisoner. "You're in for it. The trap is closing upon you. You'd better make up your mind to it. 'Twere useless, as the poet says, to expect to sit down in a tub of butter without greasing your trousers."

"After you have signed a written confession," continued Philip, without appearing to notice the thunder-struck attitude of the prisoner, "you will be obliged to sign a couple of blank pages—"

A minute of deep silence followed, the prisoner being unable, at this time, to find voices—such was his stupefaction.

"You must have lost your senses, Captain Ross," he then declared. "What? Am I such a fool, such a coward, that I will sign any so-called confession you choose to place before me?"

"Whatever you may be," answered Philip, with a stern gravity, "you will sign the paper in question before you leave this cellar. In the said confession you will acknowledge the principal crimes you have committed during the past year, and notably those connected with the witchcraft excitement. You will begin by relating how you hired Buell to assassinate me, and proceed to declare how you have persecuted Miss Waybrook, how you have conspired with the judge's niece, how you have tortured and plundered a score of men and women accused of being witches, and notably Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, the former owners of this house—"

"Never! never!" exclaimed Boardbush, with the violence of desperation. "You may kill me if you choose, but no such document will ever be signed by me. What! Do you suppose that I can be forced into signing sheets of blank paper, for you to fill out at your leisure in any way you choose?"

"Yes, I suppose all that," answered the young

navigator, quietly. "When a man of your stamp falls into the hands of a man of my stamp, he will do just as he is told to do, sooner or later. You can go hungry and thirsty a week, if you choose, but you will eventually obey my orders!"

"A week," gasped Boardbush, becoming pale at the thought of such a long imprisonment.

"Yes, or two weeks, according to your obstinacy," rejoined our hero. "As you have probably suspected, Mr. Waybrook and I are compelled to go to sea again at nightfall, and we expect to be absent nearly a fortnight. In this time you can think over the matter."

"But suppose that I sign?" interrupted the prisoner, with a shudder. "How long, in this case, must I remain in this cellar?"

"Only till this evening, in all probability. By that time our arrangements for the relief of the Harbinger will be completed, and we shall all be beyond your reach. If you sign the papers in question, I shall charge the corporal, or some one else, to set you at liberty immediately after our departure, and you may then resume operations—till I again catch you at it."

A gleam of satisfaction appeared in the eyes of the prisoner. Philip marked this gleam, and made up his mind that the papers would be signed as soon as they were ready.

"There's no telling, of course," muttered Boardbush, "what a man will do when life and death are in the balance."

"You are right, Mr. Boardbush, and I am glad to see that you begin to comprehend your situation. At noon the papers shall be ready, and you shall again see me. Until then I hope you will take your reverses easy."

"Yes, we hope you will be composed in your adversity," remarked the old soldier. "Twere useless, as the poet says, to butt your head against a stone wall. Walk in, and he again flashed his light into the vault. "Walk in and take an ash heap; if you are inclined to sackcloth and ashes, like them sinners of old, here's just the place for you, particularly in the matter of ashes. There you are, Mr. Witch Finder," and he pushed the prisoner gently into the vault. "As the dog burieth his bone for future reverence, so we have hived you!"

He closed and locked the door, leaving the prisoner in total darkness, and led the way back to his companions.

"You were gone longer than we expected," said Hester to her lover. "We began to feel uneasy."

"We were making terms with the enemy," exclaimed Philip, taking a chair, "and have succeeded."

"Yes, we've hived him!" exclaimed Trueaxe, with a burst of enthusiasm. "Hang me! I didn't know there was so much comfort in resisting your enemies—in smiting them sorely—in laying about you," and he tossed his clenched hands and arms wildly around him. "Wish to goodness I'd known it before—the joys of mauling. I'd have gone at the Witch Hunters months ago with the ferocity of a bull-dog. The sweetest thing in nature is to see the lambs a-hunting of the wolf in this manner!"

(To be continued.)

MICHEL-DEVER.

CHAPTER XXI.

MRS. COURTNEY was very sad, in spite of the joyous tenor of Claire's letter; she felt it impossible to withhold for a single day the forgiveness she so sweetly implored—for the poor child might need it, to console her for the unlooked-for difficulties into which she was about to plunge.

She went to her desk and dashed off a few lines, intending to write more fully when she felt more in the mood. She wrote:

"GRANGE, October 5th, 18—.

"MY DEAR CHILD,—I freely send you my forgiveness, and hope that it will indeed lift from your life the only cloud that rests upon your perfect happiness; that it may continue and increase is my ardent prayer.

"Mr. Jerome is indeed better, for he is in the home of the blessed, ministered to by angels. He revived sufficiently to explain your abrupt departure, by assuring me he had himself bestowed on Mr. Thorne the right to command you to go with him. He told me of what took place in his cottage on the night of his seizure; I can only account for the deception he countenanced, by the partial failure of his mind, for I do not think it was well done, to solemnize the marriage ceremony in a clandestine manner, and so informally, so far as the laws of the land we live in are concerned.

"Of course Mr. Thorne must feel as much bound to you as if a hundred witnesses were present, but I should have been much better satisfied, if every precaution had been taken to render your union indissoluble.

"Pardon these doubts, but Mr. Thorne's course towards myself has not been such as to inspire me with perfect confidence in him. I consent, however, to judge him by his future conduct towards you, and if he continues to render you happy in the lot you have embraced, I will gladly suffer the past to be buried in oblivion.

"Should you need a friend, remember that, in spite of your desertion, I shall always be ready to stand by you, and sustain you to the best of my ability.

"Your affectionate friend,

"JULIA COURTNEY."

These lines she enclosed in the following reply to Thorne:—

"GRANGE, October 5th, 18—.

"MR. THORNE,—As you desired, I send Mrs. Thorne's letter under cover to yourself, but the necessity of such a precaution fills me with doubt and fear as to the reception she is likely to meet with from your father.

"You led me to believe that he desired to see you speedily married, and cared little on whom your choice might fall, provided your wife was presentable, and well connected. I hope you told me the truth, that the letters you exhibited were genuine; for if they were not, I can think of no height nor depth of treachery of which you could not be capable.

"I will not dilate on this subject, for it is too painful to me, and too humiliating to you. Mr. Jerome is dead, but he informed me of the marriage before he expired; he would have left written proof of it, had time been granted him; but it was not. I tell you this to show you how entirely my poor child is thrown upon your honour. Oh! be true to the vows you have plighted to her, and shield her from the effects of your own imprudence.

"If my surmises with reference to your father's opposition to your unworlly choice be correct, you will be tempted to cast Claire off to regain his favour; but I will not think that you could be capable of such a wrong as that. You seemed to adore her, and you will not break her heart, for she is as utterly devoted to you as one human being can be to another, and she would scarcely survive a separation from you.

"I feel that I have said too much, but you will excuse it as the offspring of my solicitude for the dear girl I have loved so long, and cared for as if she were my daughter.

"Your friend, or foe, as you shall deal by her,

"JULIA COURTNEY."

A few days after these letters were despatched, a box was sent over from S—, in which was packed the picture to which Thorne had referred. Mrs. Courtney had it taken out, placed against the wall for examination, and she was surveying it with critical eyes, when she heard the sounds of an arrival.

A well-known step sounded through the hall, and in surprise and dismay, she heard the voice of her son, asking where she was to be found.

She had given Andrew permission to pass his summer vacation in a pedestrian tour, but by this time she supposed he had returned to resume his studies with the new term. She was annoyed, and rather alarmed, to find him under her roof when he should have been in his class.

The door was thrown wide open, and a slender youth of about twenty years of age entered the room. He bore no resemblance to his mother, for his complexion was very dark, his features delicately and sharply cut, with deep-set eyes, of a bluish gray that contrasted somewhat weirdly with his olive skin and lustrous black hair and eyebrows.

His thin lips were strongly compressed, and the stormy expression of his face did not relax, when he saw his mother advancing to greet him. She anxiously said:

"My dear boy, what has brought you home at such an unusual time as this? Though I am always glad to see you, I must disapprove of your breaking off from your studies in this abrupt manner."

Andrew put out his hand to take the one she offered him, but withdrew it again, almost with a gesture of repulsion, as he bitterly said:

"It does not matter where I am, madam, for I am in no state now to give my mind to study. I am better here than where I should disgrace myself, by neglecting everything that would be required of me."

"Why, what can have happened to you, my son?" Mrs. Courtney apprehensively inquired. "Have you got into another difficulty with the professors? I hoped that you had sown all your wild oats and meant to devote yourself to your studies."

He looked at her with a faint, defiant smile, and said:

"I would have done that—I would have made every effort to gain your approbation, if you had not played me false. You know what I looked forward to as a reward for steadiness and application; yet, in my absence, you have permitted a stranger to enter your house and bear from it the pearl of my life. Was this well done, mother? Why was I kept in ignorance of what was going on here, unless it was to serve your own purpose, by placing an impassable barrier between Claire and myself?"

Thus brusquely arraigned, Mrs. Courtney coldly replied:

"I had no voice in the arrangement of Claire's marriage—it was secretly solemnized, and she eloped with Mr. Thorne. I did not mention it in my letters to you, because I did not wish your mind to be disturbed by news which I knew would be painful to you. How have you learned anything about it?"

Andrew passionately said:

"I have seen her, but only for a moment. A carriage passed me, from the window of which Claire was looking. I knew her in a moment, and I shouted to the driver to stop. He cut his horses and dashed on, though Claire confirmed my recognition by kissing her hand to me, and she pointed to the fellow that sat beside her, who looked so well pleased that I could have killed him. I never knew till that moment how dear she was to me, but when I saw that carriage rolling away in the distance, bearing her from me for ever, I felt as if all joy, all hope, all ambition went with her. I left my companions, and came hither as soon as I recovered from the illness that attacked me, to ask you to explain why you have permitted so great a wrong to me to be consummated. You have long known what Claire was to me, yet you have received that man into your house—you must have encouraged his pretensions, or he would never have dared to snatch from me my heart's darling."

Mrs. Courtney began to comprehend now what she had not before suspected, that the childish love of her son for his pretty playmate had become the absorbing passion of his life. She had not believed that, at his age, the feeling could have struck so deep, and she listened in alarm to the passionate vibrations of his voice.

Andrew had a difficult temper to deal with, for he was both tenacious and resentful, and for many reasons she had been unwilling to allow his childish romance to have any other ending than the one which had so abruptly come. Jealous, violent, and haughty, she knew that few women could be happy as his wife, and she deprecated the thought of his uniting his fate with that of another high spirit; for, in spite of Claire's loveableness, she knew that in her nature lay undeveloped traits, which would spring into active and baneful life under such treatment as Andrew would give even to one he loved.

Better a disappointment, she thought, than lifelong wretchedness through an unsuitable marriage, and from this conviction had arisen her tacit encouragement of Thorne's suit. To soothe and reconcile this impetuous and often unreasonable being, was now her task, and, as she looked into his dark face, instinct with passion and pride, she felt how difficult of accomplishment it would be. She gently said:

"My dear Andrew, do not blame me for what has happened. Mr. Thorne met with a severe accident in entering the valley through the gorge above the Lady's Tarn. He was near losing his life, and lay ill several days at M. Lapiere's house. It was then that the attachment was formed which has led to such an unhappy result. After her father's death, Claire came to me. Mr. Thorne was already my guest, as I had asked him here for the purpose of separating him from my god-child. I could not refuse him the hospitality of my house, and I did not dream that he would abuse it in the manner he did. I made every effort to retain Claire with me, and her secret marriage was as displeasing to me as it seems to be to you. But since it is irrevocable, we must reconcile ourselves to it."

Andrew almost savagely replied:

"As if that were possible! I remember that you wrote something to me about some one being nearly swept into the Tarn, and I suppose it was he. I wish he had. It had been a better fate, perhaps, than the one that may overtake him yet."

His mother looked into his agitated face, and, laying her hand upon his arm, firmly said:

"That threat must be an empty one, Andrew. If you love Claire, or care for her happiness, you can never seek to injure the man with whom she was so deeply infatuated as to forsake her home, and every friend she possessed in the world, to go with him. You feel this bitterly now, but your pride will soon

teach you to forget a girl who has preferred another before you."

"Oh, mother, you don't know how bitter it is to have the sweetest hope of a young life suddenly wrenched away!" and his voice, which had been hard, suddenly broke, and a burning tear rolled down his cheek. "I could take the life of this man who has rivalled me, and never feel a regret for doing it. But of what avail would that be? I shall only make Claire hate me. I hope he will be as false to her as he was to you when he stole her from you. I hope he will estrange her heart by unkindness, till it is forced to turn to me for consolation. Don't look at me so. I do hope it, and Claire deserves such retribution, for forsaking those who so truly loved her, to run off with him."

"Andrew, my dear son, do not speak thus, I entreat," remonstrated his mother. "If we all met our deserts, think what a bowling wilderness of pain and despair this bright and beautiful world would be. Remember the French proverb, 'that curses, like chickens, come home to roost,' and refrain from invoking them on our poor, thoughtless fugitive."

"If the curse would only take the form of Claire, and she would come back to us half broken-hearted by that fellow's barbarity, I could do nothing but rejoice, for then I might be able to console her."

Mrs. Courtney gravely shook her head.

"She would only be more widely severed from you than ever, my poor boy. Give her up as lost to you for ever, Andrew, and seek to uproot every fibre of the unfortunate passion you have cherished for her. Claire would never have made you happy; she was unsuited to you in every way; but I trust that with the man she has chosen, she will find such happiness as will develop the better portion of her wild nature, and leave its darker passions unstirred. If you really care for her, you will pray that such may be the result of her precipitate marriage."

"Pray," he scoffingly repeated; "pray for such a consummation as that! No, I am not such an idiot! I would much sooner take some of old David's maledictions and hurl them at the pair. I only hope that their fool's paradise will soon come to an end, and that Claire will think, with a sore and aching heart, of the love she slighted and ran away from. I cannot forgive her; neither can I help loving her, and hating the man she prefers to me. I would like to thrash him to a jelly for his presumption. If I had known what was going on here, I'd have done it, too, long ago."

He rose from the seat on which he had thrown himself and walked to and fro, in much excitement; his mother sat pondering in pained silence, wondering what to him would be the result of this bitter disappointment. She had very little control over him, for his imperious temper had always mastered her, when she attempted to use such authority as she possessed, and, in the present crisis, she felt certain that he would set it entirely at naught, if she made an effort to draw the rein ever so slightly.

Suddenly his eyes fell upon the picture which Mrs. Courtney had set up in a good light. He recognized the figure of Claire at a glance, and, with a tiger-like bound towards it, he exclaimed:

"Who painted that? Who dared to send back the shadow when the reality has vanished?"

"Mr. Thorne is an amateur artist; that picture is his work, and it only came to me this morning. He sent it as a peace-offering."

Andrew glared at it with his strange-looking eyes, from which fire seemed actually to scintillate. With bitter emphasis, he said:

"Love has taught the artist a good lesson at all events. Small as that figure is, no one who has once seen Claire would fail to recognize the grace and harmony of her person. Even the tiny face is full of life and expression. But the eyes! I never saw that light in them before! Heaven! was it born of her love for the painter? Had she ever regarded me with that love-lit glance I should have gone mad with joy," and he fastened his burning eyes upon the brilliant face, as if he would intoxicate himself with its marvellous charm.

Andrew went on as if communing with himself: "Doubtless, that flower-wreathed cottage was the temple of their love—those shaded paths the Eden in which they wandered—my idol crowned with happiness by another hand than mine, the queen of those sylvan shades. But for how long will that royal gift of love be hers? Already her sceptre may have departed, and she may have learned that her hero, her demi-god, is but a clay image, with hand of steel and heart of stone. I hope it will be so—I pray that it may, for then she will return to me, and I—yes, I will console her."

His mother tried to catch the sense of his mutterings, but failed to do so. She was anxiously regarding him, when he suddenly turned to her, and abruptly said:

"Give me this, and I will forgive you for letting

Claire escape from your guardianship. If it were painted by my detested rival, I shall value it as no one else will."

Mrs. Courtney deprecatingly said: "It will be better to have no reminder of Claire near you, Andrew. How can you hope to forget her, if that picture be placed where you can see it every day?"

"I don't intend to forget her—I have no wish to do so, and I could not if I wished it ever so much. Something tells me that we have not lost her for ever. She will yet come back to us—I am sure of it. Give me the picture—I have the best right to it."

There was a latent fierceness in his tones, which warned his mother of the volcano of passion that was ready to explode, and she hurriedly replied:

"You may take it to your room for the present, if you wish it; but as it was a gift to me, I do not feel justified in transferring it to you."

He seized it, and, going towards the door, with a strange smile, said:

"Possession is nine points of the law. I have it now, and when you will get it back, I cannot tell. I will have the shade, if I cannot possess the substance—that's about as much as most people get in this world of wretched mistakes and maddening disappointments. I am going to my room—don't let any one come near me; keep Julia away—I must be alone till—till—I have mastered my own heart."

He left the room, and Mrs. Courtney sat listening till he shut the door of his chamber, which was above the room in which she sat. She heard his rapid feet pacing to and fro, occasionally stamping on the floor, in the whirlwind of rage and passion that moved his soul, and she shivered and grew pale with dread.

Julia, who had been out walking with her nurse, came in eager to see her brother, and it was with some difficulty that she was prevented from going up to him. But the child was tractable and easily controlled, so the unhappy mother succeeded in keeping her near herself, though she found it very difficult to explain to the little girl why she was not to go up and talk with Andrew, when she had not seen him for so long a time.

He came down to supper, looking quite calm, fondled Julia, and was more respectful to his mother. Later in the evening, to her surprise and joy, he announced his intention to set out on his return the next day.

To her inquiring look, he abruptly replied: "I cannot remain here to devour my own heart in the solitude of this place. I will bury myself in books till the spring comes; then you will go to France, as you promised. You need not look apprehensive, madam—I am not going after the robber who has appropriated the precious jewel I left in your charge. I am not such a simpleton as that. It will come back to us when the pinchbeck setting is proved worthless. I know some things beforehand, and I have a presentiment of what is to happen. Run-away matches seldom end well, and this one will not prove one of the exceptions."

"My son, I beg that you will not predict evil to Claire, and exult, as you seem to do, in the hope of its accomplishment."

Andrew laughed bitterly.

"She has brought evil enough to me, and tit for tat is fair play. But we won't renew that subject, mother; let us talk of something more agreeable. I will tell you of my summer tour, for I met with some amusing adventures in my rambles. I should have looked back on them with unmixed pleasure, but for the meeting that abruptly ended all enjoyment for me. I will try, however, to put that in the background, and tell you what preceded it."

The remainder of the evening passed away more agreeably than Mrs. Courtney had dared to hope.

She was amused and interested by the details given with much graphic power by the young man. At a late hour they separated; and when she awoke the following morning, she was surprised to learn that Andrew had been gone several hours. He left behind him a note for herself, which only contained these words:

"DEAR MOTHER—I shall return to my studies at once, and try to regain the time I have lost, but you need not hope that I shall distinguish myself. I shall no longer strive to do so, for I have lost the incentive that spurred me on. I take with me the only inspiration that can give me courage to go on in the course you have marked out for me—the picture of Claire. I may madden over it in the solitude of my chamber, but I should certainly lose my reason if I left it behind me. "ANDREW."

Thus ended his brief visit, which seemed only to have been made to bring his mother to an account for the part she had taken in giving a rival the opportunity to win from him the girl of his heart.

CHAPTER XXII.

AT the last stage of his journey towards L—, Thorne hired a small open carriage, in which he could drive himself and his companion on to his father's house. It was but ten miles from the point at which he stopped, and the afternoon was more than half gone before he was ready to set out.

He lingered at the stopping place longer than was required, for he wished to get to Thornhill after night, as he had many painful misgivings as to the reception he might meet, and he began to dread presenting his companion as his wife.

As the inevitable hour of trial approached, in his heart he cursed himself as the most egregious of fools for the part he had played. Now that the object of his pursuit was won, after the fashion of men of his stamp, he ceased to value what was so entirely his own. He had thrust care behind him, and enjoyed a few weeks of halcyon bliss, which he now thought had been too dearly purchased, if the price exacted for them was to be his father's disfavour, and the possible loss of his inheritance.

He vainly asked himself what he should do if the colonel proved inflexible. He could decide on nothing till that first momentous interview was over, and a cold thrill came to his heart as he thought that nothing less would appease the ire of Colonel Thorne than the sacrifice of the confiding being who sat beside him, perfectly unconscious that her advent in the home to which he was taking her would produce a storm that might for ever wreck her life.

"Should he stand by her through everything?" was the question Thorne asked himself more than once, but he could find no reply to it. His love-dream had been very sweet, but he was becoming a little weary of its monotony, and with every mile they passed over, a slight feeling of irritation against the hapless cause of the dilemma in which he found himself placed, gained ground.

Claire caught a glimpse of his knit brows and troubled face, and she paused in her prattle and asked: "What annoys you, Walter? Are you afraid that your father will be dissatisfied with me? I promise to try and make the best impression upon him. I am so anxious to do credit to your choice, that I shall make every effort to please him."

He uttered a constrained laugh.

"Don't fill your head with fancies, Claire, or you will be sure to fail. Do your best, *petite*, and I—well, we shall soon know what we have to depend on."

"What do you mean, Walter? Is there any doubt—any fear in your mind as to—as to—"

Her voice died away, and Thorne turned and looked sharply in her face. He slowly said:

"I wonder what you would think if I were to tell you the exact truth? You must soon know it now, at any rate."

He saw that she became very pale as she asked:

"Have you withheld from me anything I ought to know, Walter? Has not everything been perfectly fair and above-board with your father?"

"Why, no—not exactly. The fact is, that he does not know that I am actually married, and as he has rather strict notions on the subject of filial duty, he may act rather unpleasantly when he first sees you. He is a regular bombshell, but I hardly think he will explode with violence when I introduce you, for you are pretty enough to disarm the rage of a tiger. I only say this to prepare you to excuse his infirmities of temper, and—and to bear with them for my sake."

"If that be all, you need not look so grave, for I can bear a good deal from your father. But I am sorry you kept from him the knowledge of our marriage. I thought the news would be so pleasing to him that you would hasten to inform him of it."

"Don't you see, Rosebud, that the governor would have been offended, if he knew that I was forced to elope with you in order to secure you? And then he would have insisted that I should come home at once with you; but as I wished to enjoy our honeymoon without being intruded on by other people, I did not care to let him know what had happened."

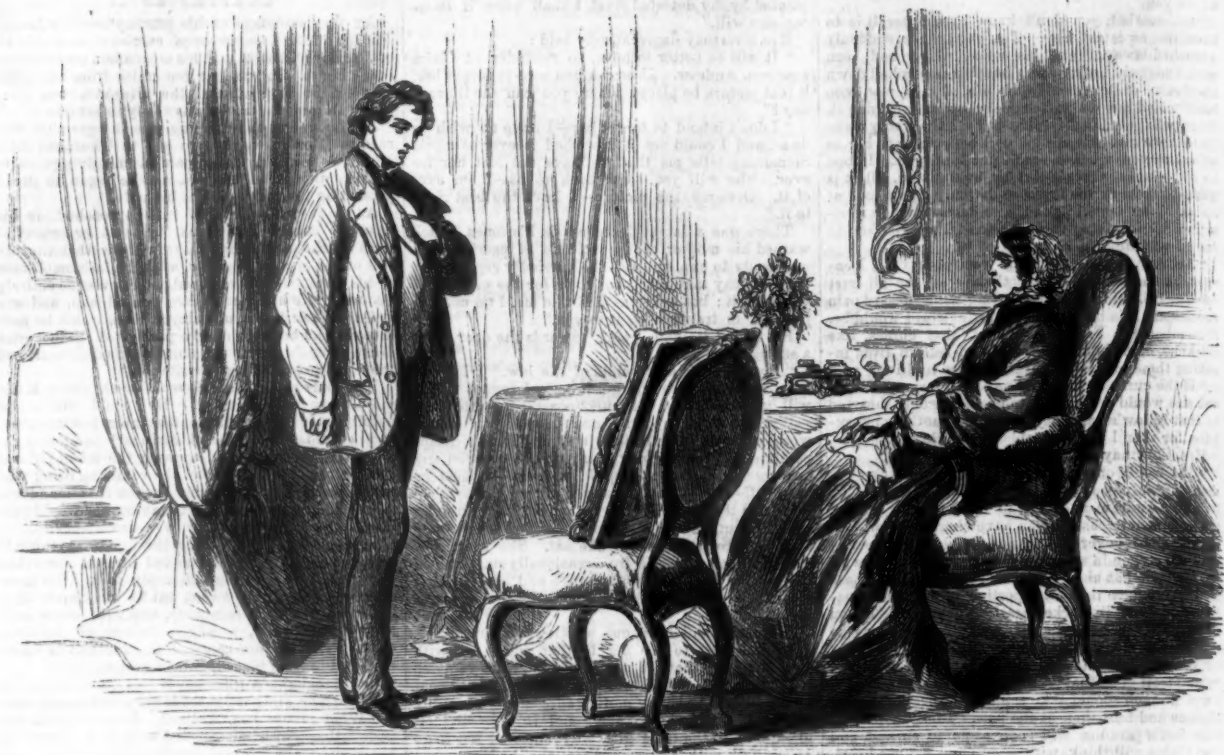
"But you have surely written to tell him before this, Walter? You would not take me to your father's house, without first preparing him to receive me as your wife?"

"Well, yes, I did write, but—"

He paused, unwilling to admit that he had not possessed the courage to send his letter.

"But what, Walter?" Claire asked.

"Oh, nothing. Don't agitate yourself now till you become so unnerved as not to be able to sustain yourself creditably through the ordeal that awaits you. Everything depends on you, Rose; if you don't win the good graces of my father in your first interview with him, I don't know what the result may be to both of us. I tell you this to put you on your mettle, for you are a plucky little thing when once you are fairly roused."



[THE PORTRAIT.]

There was a sudden flash from her dark eyes, but the fire was speedily quenched by the tears that sprang into them, and she faintly said:

"I regret that so much deception has been necessary to win so worthless a prize as I seem likely to prove. If you had told me the whole truth about your father, Walter, I think I should have elected to remain with mamma, till you could have openly and honourably claimed me."

"In that case, I should never have claimed you at all," Thorne cynically replied. "My only chance was to take time by the forelock, for my father was determined to have me married, and he never would have consented to the delay of two years. I have brought him a daughter-in-law he should be proud of, and it rests with yourself to render the path before you smooth and easy to travel."

"I will do my best," was the low reply, and Claire asked no more questions, for she began to dread the revelations that might be made to her.

If Walter had deceived her in one thing, might he not have done so in others?

What reliance could she place in him, if all his assurances of a tender welcome to her new home were false?

Claire was too much bewildered to think clearly, but the future, which she had pictured in such glowing hues, suddenly loomed before her dark and menacing, though she could not comprehend the extent of the danger to which she was exposed.

Comforting herself with the thought that he had in some measure prepared his wife for the rude shock that awaited her, Thorne drove on in silence till the stars came out, and at a sudden turn in the road the lights from the town of L— shone like fire-flies in the distance.

"We are in sight of L—," he then said, "and the large gabled mansion, on the rising ground to the left, is Thornhill. We shall be there in a few moments; remember what I have said to you, Claire, and be calm and courageous."

"I am calm," was the reply; "I have been nerv- ing myself for what was so unexpected, and will be so unpleasant—but I shall not fail to do all in my power to conciliate Colonel Thorne."

They drew up at a gate leading into the grounds; the horse was secured by throwing the bridle over a projection of the iron fence, and Thorne lifted Claire from the vehicle as he said:

"I think it best to avoid the bustle of an arrival, therefore we will walk up to the house. I wish to see my father alone a few moments, and at this hour I shall find him in his library. I will take you to a sitting-room near it, and leave you there till we come

to you. You won't be afraid to stay by yourself in the dark a few moments?"

"No—I am not afraid of the dark, but I do not like to be smuggled into your father's house as if I had no right to enter it. I never expected from you such treatment as this, Walter, and I begin to dread—I scarcely know what."

"Pooh! nonsense, child. I only wish to bear the first brunt of his anger, and make things easier for you. After I have talked him over, I will bring him to you. Let us take this path—it leads us to a side entrance near the room to which I wish to take you. You will be quite safe from interruption there, for no one ever enters it at this hour."

With most reluctant feet did Claire enter the grand house, to which she had so lately expected to be graciously welcomed as its future mistress. Trembling with dread and excitement, with which bitter and angry mortification was mingled, she sat down in a large chair, which Thorne wheeled towards a window through which the moon was shining.

In reply to his whispered words of apology and encouragement, she curtly replied:

"I shall do very well, only I hope you will not be gone very long; neither my courage nor temper may stand this test if you try them too severely."

"Temper, my angel? I thought you were always as serene as a calm summer morning."

"Lightning and tempest are born of summer heat," she lightly replied; "but on you the storm shall never burst, if you continue to me all you have lately been. If not, I cannot answer for the result."

Thorne haughtily drew back, and asked:

"Is that intended as a threat, Claire?"

"I hardly know. I am bewildered at the strangeness of my position; it is so different from what I have been led to expect. Don't try me too far, Walter. If you get angry with me just now for the first time, I may break down when it is most important to be calm."

Thorne stooped forward and kissed her on the forehead, and she received the caress as a peace offering, though her heart was too sore at that moment to respond to it. All this had come upon her so suddenly—she was so unprepared for the reception she was likely to meet from her new father-in-law, that she could not entirely quell the resentful pangs that disquieted her heart.

Thorne went out, leaving the door open behind him. As Claire sat there alone in the dark and cheerless room, a chill struck to her very heart, and she felt as if all the light in her young life had been quenched, in the certainty of the double-dealing of him she had so implicitly trusted.

How far had he revealed the truth to her? she wondered. What means would he take to appease the wrath of the parent he evidently dreaded to meet? Poor little girl! she was as proud as she was loving, and she felt humiliated to the dust by her present position, while she clung wildly to the husband to whom she had so unreservedly given herself.

All her dreams of grandeur faded suddenly away, but she felt strong to go out upon the hardest path, and fight the battle of life with the man she loved, if his strong hand were held forth to sustain her.

That he would give her up at the command of his haughty father, she did not once think.

Claire knew, without being told, that the marriage made by Colonel Thorne's son would not be approved by him, and she grew faint and sick as she remembered that letter, which she was constrained to believe a forgery. In excuse for her husband she said to herself:

"He must have loved me to desperation, or he would never have used such means to win me. Poor, dear Walter! with so tyrannical a father as Colonel Thorne must be, there was no other course left open to him. I, at least, should be the last one to judge him harshly for what was done for my sake. No—no—I will not—I will not."

But in spite of all her efforts to be truly loyal to her husband, fears and doubts would still surge up, and through all her after life, Claire remembered the half-hour passed in that darkened room alone, as the bitterest of her unhappy experience.

Thorne stumbled through the narrow, lateral hall till he came to a door which opened into a vestibule lighted by a bronze lamp swung from the centre of the ceiling. He crossed the floor noiselessly, and entered a room on the opposite side without knocking. A small fire burned in the grate, though the evening was warm for the season, and a shaded lamp stood on a circular table drawn up near it.

The door leading into the octagon room before described, was open, and through it floated the fragrance of a fine cigar. By this token Thorne knew that the terrible judge he sought was not far away, and with a weak and trembling heart he advanced to that sanctum, in which he had so often borne the brunt of his father's wrath. But all that had gone before, would, he believed, be child's play in comparison with what now lay before him. He could scarcely have been more unnerved if he had been about to enter the den of a tiger, and his courage sank down to zero as he approached the open door.

(To be continued.)



[CELESTINE AND THE STRANGER.]

CORDELIA'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE first thing I did upon reaching my house was to write a note to Mrs. Larkton. I informed her of the result of my interview with her husband, and told her that I should not visit her again at present, unless I had something of importance to communicate. But she need not be down-hearted, for I believed I should be able to save the family from the threatened calamity, by the opening of Mr. Larkton's eyes to the truth. A word to Cordelia, and I sealed and superscribed it, and gave it to my boy with directions that he should deliver it into Mrs. Larkton's own hand; and I told him he might wait for an answer if the lady had one to send.

In half an hour Georgie returned, and brought me a note from Mrs. Larkton. It was written with a pencil, and in haste, as follows:

"DEAR DOCTOR,—Thank you for your thoughtfulness, and for your words of cheer. But you must work while there is opportunity. Cordelia is already twenty years of age, and her father declares she is able to be married; and he seems determined to hasten matters. Fitzroy has so worked upon him that he is no longer his own master. The case looks dark and threatening. Oh! make haste, or all may be lost. For Cordelia's sake, hurry and tear the mask from a villain's face; for such, in truth, I believe that man to be. I may be uncharitable, but I cannot help my dreadful suspicions. You have our love and our prayers. Your friend, truly,

"ISIDORA LARKTON."

I would have given a goodly sum could I have had the privilege of conferring with Celestine St. Marcellin. She might have been able to meet this piece of rebutting testimony, which Fitzroy had left in the banker's hands. But I should be likely to hear from her soon; and when I knew where she was, I could go to her.

But there was another piece of business upon my hands, so that I had no time for idleness. It was the evening on which I was to visit my patient in the wood, and at nine o'clock I started, feeling that I was still pursuing something of deepest interest to myself. The evening was calm and mild, but a film of cloud shut out the stars, and the way was quite dark—so dark that, as I had time enough, I did not hurry, but rode thoughtfully on, revolving in my mind the strange events that were crowding themselves into my path. I thought of the picture upon the wall—of the wide-mouthed tunnel which I

had seen in my vision—again my patient in the wood arose before me in connection with Celestine St. Marcellin, and with Cordelia Larkton; and in spite of all that calm reason could present to the contrary, I could not banish from my mind the impression that in either quarter I was following the same track, and that in the end, as I had seen it in the picture, there would result from the strange combination of circumstances deliverance to the maiden whom I loved.

When I reached the house in the wood I found all still, and I saw no light in any of the windows; but a knock upon the door brought the woman in sight, and when she recognized me she admitted me without remark, this time conducting me to the chamber of my patient without delay. I found him alone, and he told me that the woman was the only one at present in the house with him. He had had other attendants through the day; but they had gone out.

"On business, I suppose," suggested I, with a smile.

He nodded, and smiled in return. We understood each other so far.

"A strike in the country, eh?"

He nodded again.

"You should be careful, my boy," I said, soberly, as I took a seat by the bedside, and took his wrist in my hand. "If your companions wish to follow their occupation in this part, they had better not make this their place of rendezvous. It may bring the officers upon you."

"That's what I told 'em," he exclaimed, without stopping to reflect. "But,—em! they don't seem to care any more for me than they would for a sick dog. I believe they'd prick my heart without compunction, if they thought I was the least bit in their way!"

I thought to myself that I would give him light upon that point before I left him.

What a magnificent constitution the fellow had! I found the wounded stump to be in a condition far better than I could have believed possible. The new granulations were setting finely, and there was not an atom more of supuration than was absolutely necessary. It gave promise of healing rapidly, and of giving but little trouble. The fever had so far abated that the pulse had resumed its natural beat, while the general tone of the system was favourable in every respect.

I called in the woman to help me dress the leg, and when this had been done I dismissed her. I made sure that she was not listening outside, and then I sat down for a little serious conversation.

"Will," said I, "you and I have got to stand by each other."

"Eh? What d'ye mean, doctor?"

"You told me a little while ago that you believed your companions would take your life if they thought you were in their way."

"Yes, sir; and I believe they would."

"And now," I pursued, "suppose I should tell you that they would not only put you out of their way, but send me along with you?"

"Eh? You don't mean it, doctor! They wouldn't—but,—em!" he vociferated, with a fierce oath, "they're equal to anything! But, say, have you discovered anything that makes you think so?"

I looked searchingly into the man's face, and considered how far it would be best to trust him; and, after a little reflection, I made up my mind that I might rely with safety upon him, if I could get his word to that effect; and I asked him if he would stand by me, and keep my secret.

He took my hand of his own accord, and solemnly swore that he would be true and faithful unto death. And then he added, with a calm sincerity of expression:

"Let me know that the thought of putting me out of the way has been broached, and I'll stand ready to back you up with any evidence you want."

I then related to him the circumstance of my meeting with the man outside on the occasion of my last visit, and of my having obtained the letter. I told him how I had taken the letter home, and read it, and how I had finally deciphered it; and then I drew forth the copy which I had made—the copy of the original missive—and, having placed it in his hands, I went and got the lamp, and held it for him to read. He read it slowly and carefully, throwing out the redundant words, and then going back to make out the sense, read on with deep interest, and when he came to the postscript, and had found out its meaning, he folded the paper very slowly, pressing down each turn as with a ponderous oath, and when he had done this he handed it back to me. His teeth were set like the jaws of a vice, and his eyes gleamed with a blazing light.

"You read that?" he whispered.

"Yes," I said. "It cost me an effort, but I accomplished it."

"Look at me, doctor!" he cried, with startling energy. "See me maimed for life—a poor, half-bodied cripple—all done in service for them. They put me under fire,—they put me where the danger was,—and now I may be poisoned, because I can be of no more use to them."

"While I," I added, "am to be put out of the way

because, by helping you, I have necessarily learnt some of their secrets!"

"I see, I see," he said. "Yes,—you and I may go together. I'm glad you showed me that, for now I can be on the watch. And yet," he added, after a little thought, "I don't believe the boys would do it. The captain would in a moment, though. I've done some wicked things in my life, but I think I should be afraid of my own shadow, if I had done what he has done."

"Is this Vitterson your captain?" I asked.

"Yes, sir."

"And who is he? What is he?"

For a moment Martin gazed at me as though he had not language at command in which adequately to express himself, the result of which was that he spoke with unusual calmness, but with all the more force:

"Doctor Cartwright, Ormond Vitterson is a villain from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet!—a villain inside and out, and all over! He thinks no more of shedding blood than you do from the point of a lancet."

"Does he come from London?" I asked.

"He hails from London now," replied my patient.

"The men that we call villains are mere babies in the business compared with him!"

"What sort of a looking man is he?" I asked.

"Eh!—you look earnest like, and excited, doctor. Do you think you know him?"

"I don't know," I replied. But I was aware that Martin had judged rightly when he said that I was excited; for I was wrought up to the very highest pitch of excitement. "What kind of a looking man is he?"

"Well, I can tell you in short metre? He is one-third Indian, one-third Italian, and t'other third is made up of snake and panther! How does that hit you?"

"But his face—"

"Was covered with a straight black beard, the last time I saw him, sir."

"He is not a large man?"

"No, middling size."

"And how old?"

"He's older than I am; but I should say not much. I shouldn't set him down for more than thirty, or thereabouts."

"And the heaviest part of his body—that part where there is the most development of muscle—is about the shoulders?"

"You've hit it exactly, doctor."

"And his voice," said I, "is thin and wiry? It does not sound like the voice of a full-souled man."

"Worse than that, sir. His voice is like the crying of a panther at night. There isn't any manliness about it. But he can act the gentleman to perfection."

"And does he make his head-quarters in London?"

"His head-quarters are there, sir; but he don't spend much time there. The last time I heard from him was the night before we started to crack the jewelry crib, and he was then at Ashdale, stopping at an hotel in that place."

I sat back, and bent my eyes to the floor; and when my patient found I had no more questions to ask, he put a question to me. He wished to know what I knew of Ormond Vitterson.

"Will," said I, "I'll tell you frankly, I don't know anything about him; but I strongly suspect that he is up to a pretty high piece of game in Ashdale; and if he be, I may want your assistance to thwart him." The man shook his head.

"I don't know," he said, rather dubiously. "I'm afraid it would be the death of me."

"Well, never mind now. I'll think the matter over, and if I find it necessary to call upon you, I will not only see that you are placed beyond his power, but I will also see that he cannot harm you, or molest you in any way. So rest easy upon that score. I will not call upon you without your consent."

This gave Martin great relief; and when he found that I was inclined to deal thus honourably by him, he appeared the more anxious to serve me.

"And now," said I, "what is best to do with this letter for Jack Mullen? I have it all sealed up just as it was when it came into my hands. I have thought whether I had best leave it with you."

But Will knew not what to advise.

"Have you any idea who gave the letter into my keeping?" I asked.

He had not the least.

"There were a number of your band here at the house on that evening?"

"Yes," he said.

"Then," I concluded, "I think I will keep it, for I do not believe that the man who gave it to me had the least idea whom he met on that occasion."

Martin agreed with me in this, and so we decided.

Touching immediate danger, there was none to be apprehended; at least, so thought my patient. He

believed that the woman of the house was warmly attached to him, and that she would do anything to serve him.

"Just let her know," he said, "that Mullen meditated harm towards me, and I fully believe she would put poison into his drink before he should accomplish it."

But he promised to keep his eyes open, and let me know if anything of interest transpired. He assured me that I might feel that he was with me, for he had firmly resolved that he would not only leave the robber-band, but that he would stand by me in case of need, even though by so doing he had to expose some of his evil companions. But he did not wish to do this if it could be avoided.

When I went away, the woman, whose name I had found to be Margaret Conover, accompanied me to the outer door, as before, and on the way she asked me if I did not think Will was getting on remarkably well.

"Yes," said I; "and he owes much of it to you, my good woman, as he truly acknowledges to me. It is the faithful nurse that saves life in such cases. In fact," I added, as we came to a stop by the door, "the patient must, after the first operation, owe far more to the nurse than to the physician."

This had just the effect which I had intended. It placed the woman on remarkably good terms with herself, and gave her a good opinion of me; and I knew from the manner in which she bade me good-night, that my face would be a welcome and pleasant sight to her hereafter.

My horse found his way home of his own accord, for certainly I did nothing towards guiding him. I was too busily engaged with my own thoughts. What was I to think of Martin's revelation? Oh, what would I have given if I could have gone direct to Celestine St. Marcellin! She might possess the key which would now solve the mystery. I could not make another move until I had seen her, and I resolved that I would not fret and worry. I had enough information to assure me that I stood upon safe ground, and a little more—a little which Celestine might furnish—would guide me into the path of ultimate victory.

Who was Ormond Vitterson? And who was Walter Fitzroy? Were they both the same person? Had the banker's son, to win back the substance he had lost, taken an assumed name, and entered upon the profession of robber? I knew not what to think. Celestine could alone enlighten me.

It was near midnight when I reached my house, and whom should I find there, asleep in my great easy-chair, but Adam Stevens, the cooper. He awoke when I came in, and when he had rubbed his eyes open he laughed merrily at the ludicrousness of his situation.

"Egad, doctor!" he cried, after having informed me that he must have been asleep in my chair a full hour, "it does seem as though my house was a kind of trap in which to catch patients for you."

"How?" said I. "Have you picked up another waif?"

"Yes," he answered; "and this time it's a man. I found him on my door-stone. Nancy and I were just ready for bed, and somehow the idea struck me that I would take a look out of doors before I turned in, just to see what the weather was likely to be. I opened the door and saw a dark form at my feet. I was startled at first; but presently I brought a candle and found it to be a man nearly dead. He must have had a fall, for there's a bad cut on his head, and considerable blood on his clothes. We took him in, and put him to bed, and then I thought I'd come up and fetch you. When I got here your boy said you were likely to come back at any time, so I sat down to wait for you. You didn't come so soon as I had thought you might, and a hard day's work told on me."

"All right," said I, "I'm glad you've had a good nap. When a man falls asleep like that, it's a pretty clear proof that he needs it."

I took my pocket-case, and started off with the cooper to visit the new patient he had picked up for me. His cottage was the first one that stood with its gate open upon the highway as we entered the village from the railway station; so it was easy to understand why a weary traveller, coming from that quarter, should seek his door.

"It's curious, isn't it?" said Adam, as we walked along. "No sooner is one poor wanderer gone, than another comes."

Yes,—it was curious. And I wondered if this new waif, fallen upon our charity, could furnish another thread in the web and warp of the complicated experience that fate was weaving around me!

CHAPTER XIV.

UPON the bed where once I had found Celestine St. Marcellin, I now found a pitiable object indeed!

It was a man, somewhere near the middle age—if I could judge by the lines upon his brow—his face of a dead, ashen hue; his features pinched and sunken; his eyes wild and uncertain in their struggling light; his skin lying in deep folds where the flesh had wasted away beneath it; while his garments were tattered and soiled. There was a bruise over the right eye, which Mrs. Stevens had been washing, and upon the scalp there were two cuts which had been bleeding very freely. I had seen and specimens of humanity before, but I think I had never seen one quite so sad as that. Pain and agony were imprinted in every line, and over the whole was cast a shadow of degradation that made me shudder from head to foot.

I asked Nancy if he had given any account of himself, and she said no. He had not spoken an intelligible word. At first I thought he must have been drinking heavily; but there was no perceptible fumes of liquor; so I knew he had drunk nothing recently. I found his pulse very low, and a little examination told me that the system was completely prostrated by hunger and suffering. There was no disease, only the wreck consequent upon dissipation and unrest. As I held his wrist he opened his eyes and looked up into my face. When he had opened them before, they had simply been wild and vacant; but their light was more steady now, and a look of intelligence overspread his haggard features.

"Where am I?" he asked, in a husky, rambling voice.

I told him he was among friends.

A moment he gazed around, and then broke into a hoarse, unnatural laugh.

"Friends!" he repeated. "Ho! ho! you need not hang upon me longer. Kick me out! You may as well do it now as at any other time, for I've got no money. Kick me out! It won't hurt me. I'm used to it!"

I tried to calm the man, and make him understand that he had found shelter with those who would be kind to him. For a time he was incredulous; but at length he began to comprehend what I would convey, and in the course of half an hour, by the use of mild restoratives, and bathing the brow and temples, he was so far restored that he could speak freely and understandingly. He managed to tell us that he had come from a long distance; that he had started without money, and had begged his way along; that he had been kicked and cuffed; that he had been ill; that he had sunk down more than once by the wayside; and that often he had been near death's door. Touching his present position, and how he had reached the door of the cottage, he could only tell that a noble-hearted woman had given him some money, and that he had bought tickets for Ashdale. He had a faint recollection of reaching a certain station, and of having been helped out of the train by some one; but he could remember no more.

While he had been thus speaking I fancied that I could detect something familiar in his face. It seemed as though I had seen him before, but where, or when, I could not tell; and when he came to a pause I asked him if he had ever seen me before. He returned my gaze, and finally shook his head.

"What is your name?" he asked.

I told him; and with another shake, he went on:

"I never saw you before that I know of. My name, sir, if you would like to know, is Gopher."

"Is that your family name?"

"No," said he, sadly. "It is my name. I have no family name. I lost that long ago."

"Are you from London?" I asked him.

"No. I am from Cheltenham."

"Goodness sake!" ejaculated Nancy. "And she was from Cheltenham, too!"

"She!" repeated the man, with a struggle, trying to bend his head so as to see the speaker. "Who is she?"

"A woman, sir, who came here not long ago; and who came much in the same way as you came," explained the hostess.

"Never mind," the poor fellow sighed, sinking back upon his pillow. "She can be nothing to me. Thank heaven, there is no woman living who can worry any more on my account!"

It was getting late, and as the man was weak, and we all needed rest, I concluded to administer a gentle opiate, and then take my departure. I told the good people there would be no need of watching by the bedside. The patient would sleep until morning, and some time during the forenoon I would call again.

It was one o'clock when I entered my chamber, and after I had rested my head upon my pillow I turned my gaze upon the blank wall, and seemed to see the wide-mouthed tunnel again; I saw the crowd that entered it, and in the midst thereof was the strange man, called Gopher. Suddenly I started,

and involuntarily sat upright in bed. It had flashed upon me, while I viewed the phantasy of the tunnel, whence came the familiar look upon the new face. As, to my mind, I saw the bent and shattered form tottering along by the side of others in the mystic procession, it seemed to come in between me and the dark presence of Walter Fitzroy, and in an instant I beheld the similarity. Not much now—while one was strong and vigorous, and the other faded and shattered almost unto death; but it was enough to show to me that in health the face of one was like unto the face of the other, even like unto brothers. It was a likeness of outline—of general form—not of character. Had it been a similarity of character I should have detected it at once. Even now the face of Gopher, scarred and wan though it was, was a far better looking face to me than was that of Walter Fitzroy. There was the same type, but without the malevolence or the heartless selfishness of the other.

When I sank down again I was well nigh exhausted by the wild surging of emotion that had been called up by this discovery. I grasped the result as a miser might have grasped his gold, fearful lest some untoward circumstance should rob me of what I had found. Oh, if it should turn out as it now appeared—if I had made no mistake, what a new and wondrous power might I have gained to my assistance!

At length I fell asleep, and I dreamed of Gopher and of Walter Fitzroy. I thought that one had been called Chang and the other Eng, and that they were the Siamese twins; that they had been cut asunder; and that while one came forth from the operation strong and well, the other sickened almost unto death.

On the following day I was called away to a distant town on the railroad to assist in amputating a leg at the hip-joint. It was a case of complicated fracture of the femur, with extreme laceration of the flesh. There were three other physicians—all of them old practitioners—they talked of saving the leg; and they asked me what I thought of it. I replied that I had come to assist, not to give an opinion. The case was not mine. There was another consultation, during which I examined the man's leg. It had been caught at the knee between two large iron cog-wheels, and literally crushed from the knee to the thigh.

The patient himself asked me what I thought, but I would not tell him all I thought, for my opinion was that he would die. At all events, the hope of saving him lay in taking off the limb at the joint; and in the end it turned out as I had thought. The other physicians—good men, and good practitioners—had never performed that operation, and they were afraid of it. They asked me if I would take the knife, and upon my answering in the affirmative, they quickly decided as reason dictated.

I had capital success in cutting, and those who "have been there" can imagine with what profound gratitude I discovered that I had hit the joint so exactly in the right spot and direction that the course of my knife struck the capsular ligament, passed the cotyloid, and separated the ligamentum teres, as though with one clean sweep. An operation was quickly performed, and when finished I tried to hold my countenance, though such success had been a matter of certainty from the first; and my professional brethren were warm in their congratulations, willing to accept the present result as a specimen of my skill.

I may remark here that the man, being a teetotaler, and of a powerful constitution, survived the shock, and came out all right. But it was a marvel. According to rule he should have died, as we consider that the shock to the nervous system, resulting from such an accident, is fatal.

On the next day after this I received two letters—one from Mrs. Larkton, the other from Celestine St. Marcellin.

The first startled me beyond measure, as the reader can judge. It was as follows:

"WEDNESDAY EVENING.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I write to you in haste, and in the greatest tribulation. My husband is entirely beside himself. Fitzroy has so worked upon him that he declares the marriage shall take place on Monday, and he has made all the preparations to that end. He has had a licence for some time. What shall we do? That my poor husband is not in his right mind is evident enough; but his disease is not of such a nature that we can call in a physician to restrain him. I know him well, and I know that he will not only insist upon the performance of the ceremony on Monday, but that he will force it if necessary. Oh, my soul! where shall we find help? Cordelia cannot come from her home,—that would kill her, for it would estrange her father's love for ever! Are you at work? Can you do anything? Can you find some proof to present to the infatuated man? Am I hop-

ing against hope, or is there any promise for me? Write to me. Come to me if you can. I need not caution you, for you know all that I know.

"Ever your friend,

"ISIDORA LARKTON.

"TO PAUL CARTWRIGHT, M.D."

This was Thursday morning, and I must do my work before Monday. But what had Celestine to say? Much of my hope was in her assistance, and as I opened her letter I fervently prayed that it might contain an antidote to the other. It was as follows:

"No.—, CHERRY ST., LONDON.

"KIND FRIEND,—I write you according to promise. I have found a resting-place as above, where a letter will be sure to reach me should you wish to write, as I shall remain here while in London. I have not yet found what I seek, and I may not find it at all. If I do not, will Mrs. Stevens let me stop with her through the summer months, if I pay her well? If I cannot find what I seek, you shall know the whole of the story of my poor life when next we meet.

"Your humble and sincere friend,

"CELESTINE ST. MARCELLIN."

I had saved Celestine St. Marcellin's life—I and my friends—and she must now save what was of as much account to me. That it lay in her power I felt sure, and I determined to seek her at once. I drew up my pen, ink, and paper, and wrote a short note to Mrs. Larkton, simply informing her that I was busy, and that in prosecuting the work I must visit London.

I was going immediately, and should return on the morrow. I told her to take cheer and whisper words of comfort to Cordelia.

"Since I saw you last," I wrote, "new complications have arisen, and it may be that new trumps have been dealt out to me. Wait until our turn comes, and I think it will be found that we hold the winning hand."

Mrs. Larkton was a dear lover of the social game of whist, and I knew that the force of the figure would be appreciated by her. After the letter had been sealed and superscribed, I hesitated on account of that figurative sentence.

Would she think it light and irreverent, and thus deem that I had taken an undue liberty? No, no; there could be no danger. I called my boy, and gave the missive into his hands, and told him to take it to the mansion, and be sure that he delivered it to no one but the lady herself.

"When he had gone, I looked at my watch, and found it only a little past nine. The train which I must take would leave at fifteen minutes past eleven, so I had plenty of time to call on my new patient at Mr. Stevens's.

I found the man very weak, but free from pain, and in the full possession of his senses, but I could gain nothing from him touching his personal history—nothing more than I had gained before. He would not even tell me if he had friends in that part, or if he ever had any; and when I asked him if he had been in London, he shook his head, and informed me that if I asked him no questions he should tell me no stories.

There was one piece of information, however, which he could not keep from me. I could look into his face, and see how very nearly he resembled Walter Fitzroy. If this man's beard had been longer, if his hair had been all combed behind his ears, and if he had been clad in a respectable garb, the likeness would have been complete. The contour of face was the same; but there was a vast difference in the expression of the two, though only the practised physiognomist would have readily detected the slight and varying lines in which this difference consisted. Was there any importance in this to me? I hoped so. At all events, remembering that he had come from Cheltenham, I put the card carefully away among the trumps I held, believing that it might prove a useful one.

The man's wants were few, and he was deeply grateful for the kindness we had shown him. He said he would try to merit it, and if we would give him shelter until he recovered, he would try, in the time to come, to repay us.

He appealed to warm and Christian hearts when he appealed to the honest cooper and his wife, and the appeal was not in vain. As for me, had he known how anxious I was to serve him, I fear he would have set my kindness down as the deepest kind of self-interest.

At the appointed hour, my boy drove me over to the station, and I directed that he should be there to take me back home, on the arrival of the first train on the morrow.

Blessings on the iron rails and well-balanced carriages that allowed me to sleep almost two hours. A good nap, and I was in London. I found Cherry Street. When I came to discover the exact neighbourhood, I felt grateful that I was not known there.

I rang the bell, and the summons was answered by a sandy-haired daughter of the Emerald Isle, of whom I asked if Miss St. Marcellin was in. The girl looked at me sharply from head to foot, at the same time repeating, interrogatively, the name I had pronounced.

"Yes," said I. "Celestine St. Marcellin. Is she in?"

"An' shure, sur, ye's must be mishtaken intirely. I don't know any sic' name at all."

"Are you acquainted with all the inmates of the house?" I asked.

"With ivery sowl av 'em, sur; an' shure there's no sich woman as that shtoppin' here at all."

"She came recently, my good woman."

But the daughter of Erin shook her golden locks again.

Was it possible that I had made a mistake in the number? I took out the letter and opened it. No.—, —I was right.

"My good girl," said I—the thought striking me that this refusal was only for the protection of the house against improper intrusion—"if Miss St. Marcellin is in, will you tell her that Doctor Cartwright would like to see her?"

"I'll look, sir, an' see if sich a woman has come in unbeknownst to me. Havo ye a card, sur?"

"No; but this letter will do. It is one she sent me. Give that to her, and tell her the doctor is at the door."

"I'll do it, sur, if ye'll stop where ye be till I come back."

She closed the door, shutting me out—but not for a long time; and when she came back her ruddy face was wreathed in smiles, and with a graceful bow she announced that the "doctor" could enter, at the same time expressing a hope that he would excuse her for being careful of the "reputashin uv a respectable house."

CHAPTER XV.

CELESTINE had procured a new black dress, and was so neatly and modestly arrayed that no man in his sober senses could have deemed her else than an honourable, high-minded woman.

"Doctor," she said, as soon as the usual salutations had passed and she had taken a seat, "you find me in a questionable neighbourhood, but it is not my fault. I came here on business, and I must needs make my abode where I can work to advantage. Believe me, sir," she went on, with a look that carried the whole front and substance of truth in its frank and ingenuous beaming, "you have no cause to tremble beneath this roof—or, at least, in this department. I need say no more on that score. And now, sir, I am anxious to know what can have called you so soon to search me out."

"No, no," I smilingly interposed, "I have not searched you out. You yourself gave me notice of where you were, and I have only improved the opportunity."

"Doctor, you trifle with me. There is more in it than that."

She spoke half sportively and half reprovingly.

"Pardon me, Celestine, I do confess that I have sought you; and that, too, upon most urgent and important business. I have once saved you—I now call upon you to save me."

"Doctor!"

"As I live, dear lady, I believe you have the power to do it. I will be frank with you—I will tell you the whole truth, and then you can judge for yourself how far you can with propriety help me. You have heard of Cordelia Larkton, and you know that she has been under my professional charge?"

"No," she said, with a start and a sudden kindling of the eye, for which I could not then account. "I knew that you had a young female patient, but you never spoke her name in my hearing before. But go on, sir."

I then proceeded to tell her of Cordelia—how beautiful and good she was, and how I loved her, and how she loved me, and how our vows had been exchanged, and how the mother was with me heart and soul. And then I went on to tell her the whole story of Walter Fitzroy's relations with Andrew Larkton—of the compact which had been entered into between them, concerning the marriage of the son of Fitzroy and the daughter of Larkton, speaking of the terms of that will, an account of which Celestine had herself once given me. And then I continued the narrative as it appeared on the surface.

"Walter Fitzroy has come from London," I told her, "and claims the hand of the beautiful maiden. He professes to love her devotedly; he wears a look of extreme self-righteousness before the old banker, and declares that he cannot come into possession of his property until Cordelia is his

wife. He has so worked upon the poor old man that the latter has determined that the marriage shall take place on Monday."

"On Monday?" repeated Celestine, without looking up.

"Yes," I said, "on Monday next. It must not be! Mr. Larkton is not responsible, and yet he is so far master of his reason, that no legal restraint could possibly be imposed upon him."

Celestine had once or twice attempted to interrupt me during my recital, but had restrained herself and remained silent. And when I had concluded, she sat for a full minute with her head bowed on her hand in profound meditation. At length, I noticed her fingers began to work nervously together, that a thrill seemed to run through her frame, and, finally, with a movement quick and convulsive, she started to her feet and stood before me.

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I have already had occasion to remark that the cottage of the cooper was the first dwelling reached, on the Ashdale side, in coming from the station to our village, and on the present occasion, as we approached his neat abode, I saw the stout artisan himself by the garden gate, waiting to accost me.

"What is it, Adam?" I asked, pulling up by the sidewalk.

"You'd better come in, doctor. That poor fellow had a pretty comfortable night of it, but this morning he's took worse and seems to be dying. Nancy and I have done all that we can; but—"

I did not wait to hear any more, but having directed my boy to drive home and put the horse up, I found the man in a semi-insensible state, as though just recovering from some sort of a fit. The heart was struggling very feebly, but with a motion which assured me that it had been beating violently. I spoke to him, but he did not know me,—he did not know anything,—though there were signs of returning consciousness. As soon as I had satisfied myself that he was not dying, but that, on the contrary, he was slowly recovering from his extreme prostration, I asked Nancy how he had been taken.

"Poor man!" she said, "he seemed well enough till about half an hour after breakfast. He had a splendid appetite, and ate with a real relish, and—"

"And what did he eat?" I interrupted, the light beginning to dawn upon me.

"Some of our nice baked pork and beans."

"With coffee, pickles, and hot brown bread?"

"Yes, sir."

And so the cat was out of the bag, and its colour was palpable enough. I told the good woman that her generosity was to be commended, but that it had very near killed her lodger; and then, while I prepared a powerful antimonial emetic, I explained to her that in the whole range of cookery the man could hardly have eaten anything that would have been worse for him.

Mrs. Stevens was expressing her regrets when the outer door opened, and Celestine St. Marcellin entered the kitchen, and seeing us in the adjoining room she came in.

I was on my way to the bedroom, and the women, still shaking hands, and telling how glad they were each to see the other, followed me. Nancy came to help me give the medicine, and Celestine accompanied her without the least thought of the old room's being occupied. She reached the door, and when she saw the man upon the bed she started and drew back.

"Come in," said I, "he is not fit to be disturbed at present."

But she came in without seeming to have heard what I said to her—came as though something in that haggard face had attracted her. Without turning her gaze to the right or to the left she slowly advanced to the side of the bed, and fixed her eyes upon the object that appeared upon the pillow.

I saw her turn pale. I saw her fingers clutch at the folds of her dress—saw her stop and gaze until I feared that her own reason was tottering. But presently the blood came back into her cheeks, and she looked towards me.

"Doctor, do you know where that man came from?"

Her voice was not raised above a whisper, but it was intensely distinct.

"Yes," I answered. "He says he came from Cheltenham."

"Do you know his name?"

"No," I said. "I only know that he called himself Gopher; but I am very sure that is simply an assumed cognomen."

I tried to read something in the expression of her countenance, but I might as well have sought intelligence from a piece of marble.

She moved towards the upper part of the bed, lifted the hair from the man's brow, and when she had brushed it away behind the ears, and had looked a moment longer into the pale and haggard face, she withdrew.

"Give him the medicine," she said, as she turned away, "and when you are ready I will see you alone."

With considerable effort I managed to get a sufficient quantity of the emetic down my patient's throat; and leaving Adam and his wife to watch by him for a time I joined Celestine in the front room. I found her with her head bowed upon the table; but she looked up as I came in, and I saw that she was deeply agitated.

"Oh, my soul!" she ejaculated. "What wonderful thing is this! Doctor, do you not know who that man is?"

"Indeed, Celestine, how should I know? I never saw him before."

"You spoke of Walter Fitzroy," she went on, in

hurried, breathless tones. "You said he was here—in this town, and that you had seen him—had spoken with him."

"Yes," I said.

"You said he was seeking the hand of the banker's daughter?"

"Yes—and will be her husband on the day after to-morrow, if we cannot prevent it."

"Does he look like this man?" she asked me, eagerly.

I told her that he did—that in so far as mere outline of form and face was concerned, the resemblance was most remarkable.

"Oh!" she cried, starting to her feet, "I must see that man. I must behold him with mine own eyes. Ask me no questions now—ask me nothing! But tell me how I can see that man! Oh! that he should have been in this town, and I in this town—we both here, as though God had with his own almighty hand led me hither; all this, and I not to have known it?"

She was pacing to and fro across the room, strangely excited, her hands clutching the folds of her dress at her bosom, now turning her eyes upward, as though in earnest supplication, and anon bending them to the floor in meditation.

"Celestine," I said, when I had had time for thought, "your wish may be easily answered. Put on your walking dress and veil as deeply as you please, and then go forth to the hotel. He is stopping there, and is liable to be passing out or in at any time."

I told her that she might walk towards the mansion of the banker.

"You would know him, I suppose?"

She stopped and looked at me, but she did not speak the words that were first upon her lips. She crushed them back, and simply said:

"I think I should know him."

I was taking out my watch to see if it were mail time, when I remembered that the same coach which had brought her from the station had also brought the mail; and I told her if she would make haste she might see him now at the post-office, as he was generally there upon the arrival of the London mail. If she would like my company—

"No," she said, interrupting me. "I know where the office is. Do you remain and look to your patient. I will go alone."

She got her bonnet and shawl, and having arranged her veil so that it could completely hide her face as well as the turn of her shoulders, she set forth. In the entry she took my hand, and I could feel that she quivered at every joint.

"Doctor Cartwright, come to me this evening. I will see that man to-day, if I enter the hotel. If I am not mistaken beyond all the power of human sense to calculate and reason, I shall have information wherewith to astound you."

She went out, and I went back to my patient, whom I found already relieved by the medicine I had given him. I remained until I knew that he was safe, and then I left him in care of Nancy—giving her strict injunctions not to allow him to have anything more to eat, like what he had for his breakfast.

On my way homeward I passed the post-office, and saw Celestine standing upon the opposite side of the street. Not three minutes afterwards I met Walter Fitzroy, and we passed each other as though we had been entire strangers. He walked proudly erect, with the mien of a man who had achieved a great victory.

He was going to the post-office, and Celestine St. Marcellin would see him. Oh, how my heart throbbed with anxiety to know what the result should be!

(To be continued.)

FOUR Arabs at Teuret are in custody on the charge of having killed and eaten four travellers. An earthenware pot was discovered in their tent with human bones in it, which had been used to make broth. The undress uniform of a soldier of the foreign legion was discovered in the tent. Several French soldiers who are missing are supposed to have been waylaid, knocked on the head, and eaten.

DISTRESS AMONGST THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS.—There appears to have been the greatest distress amongst the Indians of the northwest of America during the past winter, and great loss of life it is feared has been the result. The Indians at Devil's Lake were getting fish enough to furnish them about half a meal a day. Fish could be taken in greater quantities, but the Indians are so miserably clad that they are unable to withstand the intense cold, exposed, as they must be, to the cold winds that pass over the lake. A man, when he goes on the lake to fish, takes all the clothing of his family, leaving the women and children with nothing but the fire in the lodge to protect them from the cold.



[A SURPRISE.]

CHECKMATE BY A BARONESS.

The still pretty and always witty Baroness Valdemir stood, like a tragic statue of dismay and astonishment, with dilated eyes and parted lips.

The whim had seized her to leave her dainty boudoir, and come down to the conservatory to hunt up, with the assistance of little Edith, her second dressing maid, who had a peculiar taste for flowers, a suitable wreath for the evening's festivity. Nothing was more natural than that her ladyship should take the nearest route to the conservatory, and instead of passing out across the marble flagged verandah to the outer door, should, in preference, glide softly over the carpeted floors to a cosy ante-room, which, on *five* days, had its glass doors thrown open into the conservatory itself, making the two apartments into one.

And when there, she drew up noiselessly the damask curtains which concealed the glass door; noiselessly, because the silken cords were so admirably hung, but not from any intentional care to produce that result.

Thus far the baroness had advanced, and it was here she stood riveted to the spot, her jewelled fingers clenched upon the curtain cord, her eyes bright, but for the haze of astonishment and bewilderment over them.

And yet it was a very charming and romantic picture, an impromptu and unconscious *tableau vivant* which presented itself for her admiration or condemnation, whichever it might be.

There was the conservatory itself, famous throughout the region as a choice gem, produced by blended skill and taste.

Light crystal arches forming the background, curtained by meandering vines of pale emerald, like rippling waves of mid-ocean spray. Between glossy

foliage, deep and velvety in massive clusters, rainbow hues, tastefully blended of myriad blossoms, from the costly exotic blooming in its porcelain vase, to the tall orange and palm trees brought thither to whisper of tropical skies and endless summers. This was surely fair framework for the tableau, nor was the latter unworthy.

A young gentleman, handsome enough for an Adonis, and richly dressed, was kneeling before a young girl, who stood almost as motionless as the baroness, her head averted, her face half concealed by the clustering curls.

The noble baroness knew very well who the girl was without seeing her face.

The plain dress, the girlish figure, the golden brown curls, told that, and she could well imagine just what sort of timid joy shone in the eyes, whose hue matched the violets blooming richly in the bed beyond.

"That child, Edith," mentally ejaculated the baroness. "How could I have been so blind?"

And then the lady's jewelled fingers relaxed their clasp, and the curtain fell again softly, though the lady did not leave her post of reconnaissance.

She bit her lip angrily, and her eyes flashed fiercely, while she remained listening to the conversation which followed, as well indeed she might, whose finger wore the betrothed ring of the handsome young gentleman.

Twenty years, to be sure, the junior of his *fiancée* he was, this kneeling youth, and yet for all that, only the week before he had knelt at the feet of the Baroness Valdemir, imploring her hand in marriage, and the baroness, yielding to the spell of his manly beauty, had answered "yes."

And now in the conservatory he was kneeling before her maid.

No wonder the bright eyes of the baroness dilated with indignant surprise, and that her delicately

shaped, aristocratically small *eyes* were alert to catch every word spoken in the conservatory.

"On my life, sweet Edith, I mean every word that I have spoken. It is you—only you, that hold my heart."

"Herr Von Armethral, why do you mock a poor girl?" spoke the low, sweet voice, reproachfully.

"It is no mockery, it is heaven's truth, beautiful Edith," returned the youth, in still more passionate tones.

"Do you think I am so ignorant? Have I not heard from my lady, the baroness, of her engagement. She is noble and wealthy as well as beautiful. Leave humble Edith alone, Herr Von Armethral, nor so wantonly insult an innocent maiden."

"But, Edith, I am not insulting you. I am in earnest, desperately in earnest. Your sweetness and innocence have shed new light into my mind, have conquered my unworthy ambition. Only give me a hope, be it ever so faint, that you return my affection, that you will smile upon me."

"You are cruel and unkind," said the girl, pulling away the hand which he had seized, and was raising to his lips. "I will tell your betrothed—my mistress. You insult us both."

"But, Edith, I repent, bitterly enough, of my foolish engagement. Stay, listen to my explanations, I implore you," he cried, catching at her dress to detain her, since the little hand had been so indignantly withdrawn. "I was mad—beside myself to consent to such a ridiculous plot; I see the folly now."

"What folly?" asked Edith.

"The folly of marrying a woman old enough for my mother; no reward can be rich enough to recompense for such a sacrifice."

The baroness, standing there behind the draped door, gave a little start, and the sluggish crimson crept through the pallor of her face.

"You speak cruelly," returned Edith. "The baroness is still young and beautiful."

"She is a fine woman, certainly. But cannot one see when the bloom is wearing off a beautiful lady, just as plainly as we know when a flower is fading, or a fruit passing from mellowness into decay? There are ominous lines around her lips, and on that full forehead of hers. And have you ever tried to count the silver threads in that glossy coil of hair she wears so regally? I repeat it, the baroness is a fine woman. I wish her well, but for me, who am young still, only youth will charm. Edith, sweet Edith, your girlish grace has a spell beyond her most brilliant attractions."

"Why did you not perceive it before?" asked she, with a coy smile breaking through the indignant pride of her lips.

"Will you let me tell you why?" asked the handsome young gentleman, quick to detect the yielding in her tone.

"I would, if I were sure it was right, but how can it be, Herr Von Armethral, when you are a noble, a Von, and I but an humble maiden, a servant in the household of the lady to whom you are betrothed?"

And pretty Edith's voice wavered again.

"Ah, it is precisely that which I would explain. I am an Armethral, to be sure, but no Von, and a church mouse could not be poorer. It was that, you know, which tempted me. I am ambitious, like other young men, and enjoy gay scenes and luxurious living, and I fancied—here he shrugged his graceful shoulders—I fancied fine clothing would be as becoming to me as to another. And I was tired—so tired of my drudgery. All this helped to tempt me, and, remember, I had not known your ennobling influence, gentle Edith. This was how I came to lend myself to Count Wexford's scheme."

"Count Wexford!" ejaculated Edith. "Why he is one of my lady's rejected suitors. A horrid old man who was furious to get a young and beautiful wife."

"Exactly," returned Von Armethral. "She would be young for him, who is old and faded for a youth like myself. I guessed that he had been rejected, and, from what he let fall, surmised that the baroness had not been over scrupulous in showing her distaste for his age. He has not forgotten it. He means to have his revenge, and because—well, he fancied I was prepossessing in my appearance (if you would only agree with him, sweet Edith), and so he found me out, and offered me plenty of money to carry on the scheme."

"The scheme—what scheme?" demanded Edith, asking precisely the question which darted fiercely through the noble listener's mind.

"I do not know it all. My part of the affair was to accept the generous purse he offered, to don the fine clothes, and come hither, as a wealthy and noble suitor, doing my best to win my lady, the baroness, to accept me as her betrothed husband. Of the rest he assured me he would take care."

"The ridiculous man, how did he think it would help his own case?" observed Edith, thoughtfully.

"One cannot tell. He gave me no hint of the denouement, but gave me his solemn assurance that I should be cleared from blame and punishment. But since I have known you, Edith, I have grown uneasy about it. Since our very first meeting here—bless the good fortune which sent me to the conservatory! I have been heartily ashamed of my part in the transaction. And it is cruel to the baroness, though, how she can be so foolishly blind as to believe one so much younger can find attraction in a woman faded away from her youthful grace is more than I can understand. But, as I said before, I do not know how he has planned the end. My part was only to win her consent to an immediate marriage. I was amused, at the commencement, and talked and acted as a comedian may, but now—now sweet Edith, that I have seen and loved you, I am ashamed of the part I have taken. The count's gold looks hateful to me, and his plot irks and tires me. Will you forgive me? will you love me a little in return for the devotion which rejects a baroness for your sake?"

Edith hung down her head, as she asked demurely:

"Can I believe that you are in earnest, Herr Von Armethral?"

"Only give me an opportunity to prove it! What shall I do to satisfy you of my good faith? I will go at once to the count, and tell him that it is impossible for me to proceed farther in the matter."

"But my mistress, my poor mistress," said Edith, sorrowfully. "She loves you."

"It is absurd to think it! a woman loving as a betrothed one who might be her son," returned he, impatiently.

The listening baroness bit her white lip till the fresh red came back to it, and tore off the betrothal ring shining forth in mocking lustre from her finger.

"If she does not love, think of her pride," continued Edith. "She has given out to all her relatives and friends, that she is to marry a second time. That shameful Count Wexford! How will you ever escape from such a snarl, Herr Von Armethral?"

"I must break through, as a lion would escape from a netted snare. I will dare all things—the count's anger—the baroness's indignation—everything, little Edith, if you will love me, and comfort me," replied he, in an ardent voice.

Edith's reply was murmured so low that the baroness did not catch its meaning, but there came after the unmistakable sound of a tender caress, a lover's kiss.

The Baroness Valdemir put her two jewelled hands to her ears, and with swift, but noiseless footfalls hurried from the place.

Cecile, the French maid, who was at the wardrobe by the open door of the boudoir, saw her mistress enter swiftly, and had a glimpse of a set, white face, and a pair of eyes glittering with fierce and angry light. But a moment after the door was closed upon her, the key clicked in its lock, and her ladyship, the baroness, was invisible to every soul in the mansion for three long hours.

The first movement the lady made after locking the door, was to advance to the great mirror which swung in a bronze frame of sportive Cupids peeping from wreathing vines.

What fierce, wild eyes they were which searched the glass!

"Am I old? Have I come to the hour of fading?" questioned the baroness, and the voice was full of wild terror, and intense bitterness.

The mirror showed her features regular and symmetrical enough for a youthful Hebe. But ah—he was right, the lines were there—wretched, wretched marks of Time's defacing fingers! The haggard look given by her pallor and intense excitement, brought them out in greater relief than before. It was true—ah, misery! The baroness saw for herself that her fair skin had lost its satin smoothness. She had wrinkles, actually wrinkles!

The faded complexion might be renovated by skilful touches from the magic resources of the toilet table; the silver glimmerings amidst the glossy hair might likewise be hidden—but wrinkles!

She wrung her hands with a slight sob of dismay.

It is a bitter moment when a woman who has been a belle and a beauty discovers that her hour has passed away, that withering time has laid a devastating hand upon her head. One must have tender heart comfortings, or deep mental resources, to smile defiantly upon the rude intrusion of this unwelcome discovery.

The baroness had no thought yet of grief at the peridy of her betrothed, or rage at the mortification of her pride. She was writhing and smarting under

the discovery of her waning beauty. To be growing old was more horrible than to be nearing the grave. She sat there before the mirror, casting shuddering glances at a face which grew more haggard and pale every moment.

Presently she arose, and began slowly pacing to and fro, until the cloud at last passed off.

"One must submit gracefully to the inevitable," she murmured.

"I see now that I have been unwise. I should have been prepared for this. But it may yet prove in season. Fortunately I have tastes whose gratification may still afford me much pleasure in life. I may still be a leader. I shall only change scenes, and take a new part."

And with this returned the recollection of the mortification awaiting her, when the news of this affair should be broken to her thousand and one fashionable friends.

The hot tide of crimson mounted to her temples as she recalled the dozen invitations to the wedding ceremony, which she had already informally extended to distant relatives. She stamped her velvet slippers foot at the very thought of the handsome Herr Von Armethral, of whom but the hour before she had dreamed such hero visions.

One's own folly is the bitterest of all medicine. The Baroness Valdemir's three hours were spent in fierce self-conflict, and keen suffering. But at their expiration, she came forth the same brilliant, self-possessed woman, and not even so small a sign as pallid cheeks betrayed how weak and exhausted the trial had left her. For she had called to her aid, with no sparing hand, the bloom which youth no longer lent her, but which French art could still supply.

She sent a letter that next morning through her trusty footman to the Baron Rosenberg, one of her old and unsuccessful suitors, a worthy man some dozen years her senior, but a high-minded, honourable gentleman. The result was the prompt appearance of this gentleman, who, after a brief interview with her ladyship, took leave, and was not seen again at the mansion, until the satin-tied invitation card summoned him to the wedding festival of her ladyship, the Baroness Valdemir.

Herr Von Armethral came to the boudoir of the Baroness just after Baron Rosenberg had left it. Her ladyship was not slow to perceive the embarrassment of his manner, but she greeted him with her accustomed cordiality.

"I am glad to find your ladyship alone," said he. "I—I have a communication to make, and I trust your ladyship will be generous and forgiving. I—"

"Oh, my dear, Von Armethral!" broke in the baroness, with her musical laugh, "as if I could be anything but generous with you. As if there need be any sort of hesitancy in confiding to each other our mutual secrets. Why, bless me! there will be more on my part than on yours. I have eighteen more years to account for. But it is delightful to remember how little difference it makes. Ah, Von Armethral, it is so beautiful that I can trust to your honest and disinterested affection."

The lady cast a tender glance towards her handsome young lover, and turned the sparkling betrothal ring to and fro upon her finger.

Von Armethral cast down his eyes, and coughed. "If your ladyship will allow me to make an explanation, disagreeable and mortifying, I admit, but which ought to have been made before—"

"Ah, but you know I will hear nothing which is mortifying to you, my dear Von Armethral. And I have not shown you the new pearls which came last night, a part of the *trousseau*, you know. You shall not blush for your bride if it can be helped. See! are they not lovely? Do you think a Persian princess could find anything purer or more peerless? Are they not truly lovely?"

As she spoke, she swung back the morocco lid of a little jewel case, and showed him a set of milky pearls nestling in a snowy bed of satin.

They might have been so many morsels of common pebble, for aught the young man could tell from his hasty glance, but he answered in the affirmative, and growing embarrassed, began to play nervously with the fringe of the couch on which he sat.

The baroness, on the contrary, sat tranquilly admiring the shimmer of the pearls, prattling on in the gayest tones.

"Yes, those pearls are inimitable, worthy the occasion. I have ordered a bridal veil to correspond, and the invitations to the wedding festival will go out this morning. You see how your impatience has conquered my reluctance to hurry affairs. But my chief reason for delay was to hear from Jack. Why, I haven't told you about Jack, have I? Jack is my half-brother, a dear fellow, though sadly wild I fear. But he is so gentle with me. I cannot believe half the wild stories they tell of him. He

sent me peremptory word to delay any announcement of my wedding, until he could be here to look after it. He has the absurd idea that I might be imposed upon, and need him at hand to shoot, or alay in some other horrid fashion, anyone who dares to offer me an affront. Ridiculous, isn't it, my dear Von Armethral?"

"Fancy the absurd notion in Jack, that you are insincere in your profession of affection, and need to be pierced through with that fatal sword of his."

The baroness laughed till the silvery echoes filled the room. Her youthful betrothed felt called upon to assist her, but his feeble attempt was such a palpable failure that he desisted, and asked, in a doubtful voice:

"Where is this Jack? I never heard of him."

"You haven't!—how very strange! But then you are in quite another sphere. Jack is what they call a sporting man. Naughty fellow! if he were not my Jack, I should be so indignant with him. He is a notorious shot, and has fought—I don't want to know how many duels, and in every one he has done just as he said he should in the commencement. Oh, he is a terrible fellow. But then, you know, he makes a splendid protector, and, of course, will be your friend; and, dear me, it is rather pleasant to think we shall have him to look out for us, for we shall be certain no one will dare offer us any affront. You shall see him to-day. I am expecting him every minute."

The handsome young suitor started to his feet, the drops of perspiration trickling down his white forehead.

"I—I think I cannot stay now. I have just remembered an important engagement which will keep me away to-day."

"Ah, well, to-morrow will do as well; but pray come early, for Jack is vexed to be kept waiting, and I want you to secure his good-will. He has already seen you somewhere, and though you may not suspect it, the wonderful creature will follow all your movements. Why, if you had the idea of trying to get away from him—which, of course, is too absurd for me to imagine—but if you had, you know it would be as impossible for you to escape Jack, as to find and climb the North Pole."

"He must be—a remarkable person," stammered Von Armethral, bending over a jewelled toy on the *etagère* beyond him.

"He is, indeed. For all his naughtiness I am rather proud of Jack's smartness. I remember that Count Wexford, a stupid old fellow, who annoyed me sadly once, used to say, that it was an excellent idea to manage, that all people inconveniently in a person's way should put an affront somehow upon Jack, who inevitably made a final disposal of them. But you shall see him for yourself to-morrow, unless you choose to wait now; I dare say in ten minutes longer he will be here."

"No, oh no. I couldn't wait now. I couldn't positively, my dear baroness."

"But you will come to-morrow. I have some few arrangements to make about the wedding *fête*, concerning which I wished to ask your advice. You will come to-morrow?"

"Yes, oh, yes, certainly. That is—ah, how late it is. I must hasten. Good-day, your ladyship."

Her ladyship waited until his step had ceased echoing in the hall, and then flung herself back, laughing derisively. If there were a bitter jarring in the tone it passed away presently, as she murmured:

"The young poltroon! How was it possible I could be so deceived by his handsome face?"

And then she began pacing slowly to and fro, her hands crossed before her; presently she went into the dressing-room, and was shortly deep in the fascinating details of the wedding *trousseau*, amidst the bevy of dexterous fingered *modistes* clustered there.

Herr Von Armethral came the next day with a somewhat haggard face, and troubled, restless eyes. He had made his acquaintance with "Brother Jack" without an introduction from the baroness.

A big, fierce, black-whiskered man confronted him, that intervening evening, just as he was purchasing a ticket for the midnight train.

"Hallo!" said the giant. "What is all this? You are Von Armethral, who is to be married in a fortnight up at Valdemir House."

"Ah, yes—and you," stammered the handsome young fellow, the knowledge coming upon him like a thunderbolt, "and you are Brother Jack."

"And what are you doing here?" twisting the black moustache into a still more brigandish look.

"I—I am purchasing a ticket for a friend of mine," faltered Von Armethral.

"All right. If you have made the purchase, then you are at liberty to come with me to my club. I've been waiting to meet you. We'll make a night of it, and toast the fair baroness in the best of cognac."

"But I promised to deliver the ticket to my friend. I should be delighted to accompany you if it were not imperative that the ticket should be delivered in season," replied Von Armethral in a voice he vainly endeavoured to steady.

"That is atrocious! Where does your friend live?"

"At the other end of the town. If you will precede me to the club, I may be able to come in an hour or so."

And Von Armethral tried to look unconcerned into the other's face.

Brother Jack whistled.

"Nay, I have a better plan," said he; "here is the carriage I have been using. Come, jump in, and we'll try the mettle of the steeds. We'll take your ticket to its destination in a trice, and then return to the club. All the while we shall be enjoying each other's society. Nothing can be easier. Come, jump in, Von Armethral."

He dragged the unresisting youth to the carriage, and fairly thrust him in, following nimbly himself to the opposite seat.

The perturbed betrothed of the Baroness Valdemir sank helplessly into the pile of velvet cushions, and made desperate attempts to hide the tremor which shook his limbs, and almost set his teeth chattering.

"This is comfortable," says the imperturbable Jack. "Now which way are we to go with the ticket?"

His companion named a street at random, and sat twisting his clammy fingers together, vaguely wondering how much power they could exert clenched at the throat opposite, which by the way was as brawny and powerful-looking as the neck of an ox. What was he to do? He felt like a mouse under the paw of a lion. Mentally, no doubt, he anathematized Count Wexford, the baroness, and above and beyond all, Brother Jack. He resigned himself, however, in desperate calmness to the situation. It might have been more comfortable, had he not learned that day, for the first time, that, by her second marriage, the Baroness Valdemir would forfeit the principal portion of her income.

When the carriage stopped at the street he had named, the young man made no effort to escape, notwithstanding he had been conjuring frantic plans all the way. He pencilled a few lines on an envelope, put into it the now useless ticket, and allowed Jack to send it up to an acquaintance, who would probably wonder all the rest of the evening at Von Armethral's eccentric ways.

And then they rode back to the club. Jack showed himself the perfection of the character the baroness had hinted. He went into the pistol gallery followed by a train of admirers, and performed all sorts of incredible feats. He fencied the best man in the crowd out of breath, and into a corner. He sent a dozen swords spinning from as many defeated hands. He tossed off his bumpers of pure brandy as if they had been so much water, and seemed none the less cool and steady. The more he saw, the more profoundly impressed with the terrible power of this terrible man grew Von Armethral.

He understood very well now how impossible it would be for a weak fellow like himself to escape from "Brother Jack," if the latter chose to pursue him. He gave up struggling with this conviction. He resigned himself to drift with the tide, since it was impossible to stem it.

And so he came in the morning, with his pale cheeks and heavy eyes, to make his call upon the baroness, whom he found chatting merrily with the dreaded and ubiquitous Brother Jack. He took leave at the earliest moment he dared, and went out by his favourite route through the conservatory. Pretty Edith, who had much fondness for the plants, and helped the gardener in his care of them, was there tying up fuchsias.

The baroness did not hear the little tragic dialogue which ensued, but just as Herr Von Armethral's black coat whisked around the outside door, she came towards Edith, and caught the blue eyes dripping their warm rain over the crimson cheeks.

"What is the matter, child?" asked the baroness, as if in utter astonishment.

Edith stood with drooping head, like a rose over-weighted with dew.

"I came for you to select a spray of orange buds to be copied in the loops of my wedding flounces. But what can you see with such eyes? Lie upon them! Tell me what is the matter, Edith."

Upon which Edith grew still more dumb, and well-nigh became deaf beside, until the lady said, pettishly:

"If you behave like this, you will spoil all my plans, and I have arranged such a pretty little romance. I am going to have you for my bridesmaid, Edith, and I mean to have you married at the same time."

Then Edith started, arched her graceful neck, and the blue eyes widened themselves till they were clear of tears.

"Have me married, my lady," stammered she.

"Precisely so," replied the baroness. Possibly there was a little acrimony in the tone. "Do you think my wedding is to pass off like every other stupid affair? Not so. I mean it shall be *piquant*, and something to be remembered. Little simpleton, do you think I have blind eyes? This Von Armethral, child, what do you think of him?"

Edith scarcely spoke above her breath:

"My lady, he is your betrothed husband."

The baroness shrugged her shoulders:

"Do you think he cheats me? He is of the *caille*, and I am of a noble family. It is to punish him for his absurd ambition, my little plan. Listen, I want you to try and like the man. He is good-looking and of your own age. See that you are obedient as usual, for I cannot lose my pleasure in the success of my little plan."

Edith listened, and while the flush deepened on her cheek the tears dried away.

The baroness's last words as she left her, were:

"Remember, Edith, to lip a single word of this, even to Von Armethral himself, will lose you every thing."

"What a wonderful woman she is!" ejaculated she, "and to think we were ridiculous enough to think she loved Von Armethral."

The wedding day arrived, and dawned auspiciously with a brilliant sky. All the fashionables in the Baroness Valdemir's world were astir, and in a flutter of anticipation. In the first place, the invitation cards were so odd, and the whole affair had so baffled curiosity. No one was positive about the bridegroom.

"Who knows him? Where does he come from?" asked one of another.

But there was none to answer. Count Wexford, indeed, smiled satirically, and answered that the fastidious baroness had at last discovered her ideal. She had found an Adonis of youthful grace and beauty, a mere boy, to be sure—probably some adventurer. What matter? Fine ladies have their vagaries, and must enjoy their whims!

And Count Wexford, with eyes bright with malicious triumph, was among the earliest of the guests. He had a little after-piece prepared, of which no one dreamed. A wretched, tattered old crone, in the rage and filth of the hovel in which he had found her, was sitting behind a foot-cloth in his carriage, waiting for the signal his valet was to receive when she was to be brought forward, and introduced to the distinguished company as the mother of the bridegroom. How Count Wexford glided over his anticipations of the scene! The mortification and distress of the bride, who had refused to share the Wexford honours, and forfeited her own rich inheritance, only to find herself the wife of a beggar and impostor—this, he was sure, would avenge his wounded pride and slighted affection. He rubbed his hands gleefully when he saw the ushers making room for the bridal party, and when the low buzz of admiration and interest arose from the assembled aristocracy, he glanced over to the imperial figure in its cloud of filmy lace, with snowy velvet trailing its costly length behind her, counting the very moments, until it should be his privilege to heap upon the haughty head the humiliation and shame he had prepared.

The lady had never looked more beautiful, even in her days of youthful triumph. A brilliant colour burnt upon her cheek, her eyes shone resplendently, she bore herself with an air of fearless confidence and glad content. The rich dress, the softly gleaming pearls, and the bazy cloud of lace, like the misty veil of an Alpine nymph, all heightened her natural grace, and concealed the ravages of time. The murmur of admiration sent a thrill of exultation tingling to her very finger tips.

"At least," thought the Baroness Valdemir, as she moved through the admiring throng with slow and stately grace, "at least I shall abdicate royally."

Brother Jack seemed taller and more imposing than ever as he escorted the bride, but the eager eyes of the gazers did not stay long with him. Who followed? What a charming young Hebe, with her shy looks and her girlish tremor! A pretty contrast, indeed, to the stately imperial woman who had preceded her. Somebody was presently sagacious enough to perceive that the brown curls were bound with an orange-wreath, and that the simple white muslin and gauze scarf were as much a bridal outfit as white velvet and point lace.

But even pretty Hilda could not hold the gaze of the assembly. The bridegroom—the mysterious bridegroom—followed.

Herr Von Armethral foiled the brilliance of the brides. He was deadly pale, and after his first glance in response to Count Wexford's magnetic gaze, he seemed transformed into a statue. But one fresh from a master hand could not have looked more like a model of manly beauty.

One and all of the ladies present exonerated the baroness at the first sight. An Apollo like that was excuse for all sorts of eccentricity.

Count Wexford smiled satirically. The bridegroom's attire was the extreme of elegance. No one was better acquainted with this fact than the count, who had paid the tailor's bill, and who had loaned the diamond *solitaire* which sparkled amidst the dainty frills. Except for his pallor the young Adonis appeared self-possessed and calm.

Count Wexford's sardonic smile brightened his face again when the clergyman advanced, and the bridal party made itself into a little semicircle before him. But he started, and hastily rubbed his hand across his eyes when they passed into their places. For of a sudden had risen up a stout, but still straight and dignified figure, not at all like an Adonis, but with the bearing of a man to be honoured and trusted wherever he appeared, a man for whom the baroness would make a young and pretty wife. She gave him a smiling glance with her white gloved hand, and then the Baron Rosenberg and the Baroness Valdemir stepped before the clergyman, and the younger couple waited as attendants.

Count Wexford stood gnawing his lip savagely, too furious to attend to the stares and whispered ejaculations going on around him. There was a fresh surprise when the Baron Rosenberg moved aside with his new-made wife.

The latter in passing the youthful Adonis had whispered a brief sentence. Whatever it might be, he flushed out of his pallor, and raised his brightening eyes to hers with a look of grateful relief.

The next moment, with little Edith on his arm, Herr Von Armethral was repeating the responses to the marriage service.

Such a buzzing followed, when the formalities were ended, and the guests crowded around with their congratulations.

"Oh, Baron Rosenberg, how you cheated us! To think your name was never mentioned, that no one ever suspected. And for you, Baroness, there is no telling the punishment you deserve."

The smiling bride glanced gaily along the circle of attentive faces to the scowling countenance of Count Wexford.

"And is it possible you believed I should consent to a tame every-day sort of wedding? One is stagnant enough in these dull times to be ready for a little enlivening excitement. The plan has been a long while on foot. Deceivers are themselves sometimes deceived, you know. There is another happy couple, good friend. Dear little Edith is a faithful creature, a *protege* of mine. I promised she should marry her lover, when I took my lord the baron for my worthy husband. He has nothing beyond his good looks. Isn't he like a picture? but Count Wexford patronizes him, and no doubt will settle the young couple comfortably. If he does not, Rosenberg and I must do our best for them. Ah, Jack, here you are. Take Count Wexford up to speak with Madame Von Armethral."

Jack was nothing loath. His broad shoulders and leonine head confronted the count, and only that individual detected the deadly sarcasm and threatening command in his oily voice.

"To be sure, my dear Wexford, you are coming up to congratulate the sweet little Edith upon the consummation of her hopes. Indeed, it is to you that she owes half her happiness. It was a lucky affair for Von Armethral when you took him up. Of course you will do the generous thing by him. I have just hinted to him, that you meant he should change that diamond pin you presented him with into sovereigns, after it had lent its brilliancy to this joyful occasion. Come up and speak with Herr and Madame Von Armethral, count."

"Curse all the Von Armethrals!" muttered the irate count, turning abruptly upon his heel.

"Upon my word," exclaimed pugilistic Jack, "this is very extraordinary behaviour, Count Wexford. I ask you to salute a bride, and your response is very uncivil."

The count turned round, glanced questioningly into the black-whiskered face, and read, perhaps, by the grim set lip under the black moustache, that it was a hazardous thing to provoke Brother Jack's ire.

At all events he walked up to the smiling brides, and went through the formal ceremony of congratulation.

"How dared you deceive me so?" muttered he, fiercely, when he stood beside Von Armethral.

"I was myself deceived. Upon my honour I believed I was to marry the baroness until the other made his appearance," answered the Adonis, rather sheepishly.

The count ground down another malediction. A clear silvery laugh made him turn, while a sullen red came surging into his face.

"My lord count," said the new-made Baroness

Rosenberg, who had given him his prompt refusal months before over a chess-board, "you made a false move with your knight, and bungled still more foolishly with the queen. You cannot marvel, therefore, that I cry 'Checkmate' at our latest game."

The count whirled round, gave her one glance of mingled rage and chagrin, and vanished from the scene of festivity.

His carriage was still waiting. He thrust out the miserable old crone with a bitter curse, fiercely directed the coachman to drive home, and threw himself back, out of everyone's observation.

My lady, the Baroness Rosenberg, returned to her noble husband with a happy, trustful smile, murmuring, under her breath:

"No one else knows how near he was winning his wicked game, this bad Count Wexford, but, heaven be thanked! I was able to cry, 'checkmate.'"

M. T. C.

CLICK, CLICK.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST, let me tell you of the night. I must do so, for it was one of those calm, solemn, still nights when nature hearkens to her own mysteries. It was dark. The keen, anxious, roving eye, by fixing itself steadily upon a given point, and straining its vision to a painful degree, could just distinguish where the darker belt of thick-leaved trees shrouded themselves. They presented a gloomy, immovable wall on the west, north and north-west, but easterly they showed broad gaps, where the harsh thunders of the ocean could be heard, as it rolled its restless waters over and over through the long night. Such a night as this, if one can be safely within doors, with a brisk light, is well enough, but to be out, and have that wretched sensation that something steals upon you unawares is terrible.

Yet there was a woman abroad this night, many, doubtless, but one of whom we have to tell. Over the mountainous ridge into the gloom of the valley she glided noiselessly as a spectre. What could be her errand? Terror would have led lightning speed to her feet, but caution checked her. Her heart was beating rapidly, and her breathing was painfully suppressed. She listened first to the wood, with the weird cries proceeding from its bosom, then turned her ear towards the city lying to the eastward of her—the city that gloated and rioted, and puffed out its polluted breath over the surrounding country. It snorted and growled at her heels for a long distance after she left it, and somewhere from it a hoarse laugh sounded, as if something knew her purpose and mocked her.

She had threaded the crowded and glittering thoroughfares, the thrifty and populous streets, passing less reputable districts; by chaste, elaborate shops, whose fine appearance of plateglass and brilliant lights acted like the fair face of a sinner hiding a soul full of corruption. She had elbowed her way through crowds of gay promenaders, who, in spite of the troublesome and dangerous times, talked carelessly among themselves, and laughed for no particular purpose. Through all this, with a heavy veil wound about her face, she went until she trod that road where we have first seen her.

She pressed on over brake, broom, and heather until the moorland spread itself before her. Here she halted for a moment, and pressed her hand upon her heart. It seemed to her that she must be stifled. She feared so much that she might meet, or be overtaken by some of the not over courteous soldiery, in which case she would have been roughly handled, to say the least, and her plans and purposes foiled.

She was about to enter upon the quaking morass that bordered the moor on the side where she was, when, with a painful gasp she listened:

"Click, click!"

Over the stony highland road which she had just traversed—click, click! The clinking of sabres.

"Heaven," she whispered under her breath, "have mercy! The soldiery are approaching."

How you tremble for her! Nothing but the broom and heather to hide and protect her. She sank down amid the shrubbery, expecting to be trodden to death under the horses' heels, resolving to die without a cry.

The troopers came on at a hard trot. The sound of iron heels grew fainter, and when nearly upon the crouching figure the leader's horse struck his fore feet into the morass.

"By St. George and the Dragon," exclaimed the officer. "We are coming upon one of those jolly pots that thread this country. Halt! Wheel to the right! Halt! I must dismount and inspect the way."

With this the trooper leaped from his horse and struck with a dull cluck into the oozy earth. At

this he commenced swearing again, and walked a few yards ahead, then to the right hand, then to the left, his heavy top-boots coming up from their prints with a distinctly audible sound.

"It will never do to trust ourselves in this confounded darkness. If we get a tumble over our horses' heads here we are hopelessly mired. Depend upon it, Ormand would not ride his petted stallion across here to-night. I am afraid he has taken the West Hadley road, in which case he will nicely wind us around his finger."

"But, Sir Cassley," said a subordinate, "your information you deemed indisputably incorrect."

"Assuredly," my informer had heard with his own ears that his lord, the Marquis of Ormand, would endeavour to gain the sea-board by crossing Kinalie Moor, skirting Limerick and striking the coast opposite the sound. Five hundred pounds go into the pocket of the man, or the men, who place my lord's neck submissive to the hemp. Well for us, O'Neile, that our throats are composed of less valuable earth. But, dang it! this quagmire completely flounders me."

And he strode a few steps farther, then he turned towards his horse, his long sabre whipping his heels at every step, and chinking against his spurs. He threw himself heavily into his saddle, with the order to return upon the road which they had come.

"Get out of this mire," said the officer to his orderly, "and on the flats of Killinklee we'll await the embarkation of his lordship."

As they ascended the hill with a noisy trot something black arose amid the intensely dark shades. How you or I would have leaped, if that thing had magically sprang up from the heather before us, without a sound, as this thing rose.

You could not for your life have made out its outlines, but as you know what crouched down there before the approach of the troopers, you breathe more freely.

"I, also," she said to herself, "have heard that he is to cross the moor towards Limerick, and I know that he will do so in spite of morass or mire. He has crossed too often to fear or hesitate."

Over the hill went the clattering horseman, and down amid the dusky broom that stood still and upright to shield her sunk the black shadow.

CHAPTER II.

IN the elegant drawing-room of Sir Allen Percival sat a lady and gentleman of marked appearance, and personally connected with the incidents of this tale. The lady was of the fairest type of Saxon loveliness, but she was pale and sad, and clung to her companion with nervous fear and mute affection.

"Oh, Maurice, I can scarcely breathe; my apprehensions for your safety are such that I know no rest. If you should fall into the hands of the Lord Protector, there would be no hope for you."

"I have no fear, Eloise. I think that I shall reach the coast in safety. Once out of the kingdom with the valuable contents of my girdle in safety, and I can scarcely fail to effect a safe reunion with your dear self."

"You are too sanguine," was the sad reply.

"And you are too hopeless, my dear," was the response; "you must not yield to despondency."

"But my father, Maurice. Think of our danger! It is too well known that his political views are the same as yours."

"True, but so long as our secret is safe they will deal leniently with him. He, it is well-known, is too feeble to bear arms."

"But yet he is not so insignificant as you would lead me to suppose. He is capable of influencing those who do or can bear arms."

"True," the young man replied with a more despondent tone than he before had used. "Yet," he continued, a moment later, "I shall not leave you long behind me."

"Oh, if you were safely out of the kingdom I should have every reason to hope."

"Well, dear, everything is arranged to my satisfaction. A boat awaits me close by Limerick, and I shall breathe more freely when her grating keel slides off old Albion's coast. What is the hour, my love?"

"Eleven."

"Just one hour more of love's sweet dalliance," and he pressed repeatedly the soft, white hand that nestled so lovingly in his.

No wonder the fair Eloise sighed as her beautiful eyes glanced over the manly and noble form of her companion. He was a perfect Chevalier Bayard. The same knightly front and regal bearing. The noble beauty of the face marred only by a slightly voluptuous outline.

"Oh Maurice, if you should be beset upon the moor."

"I should rid the kingdom of the services of more than one false-hearted dog, and then escape to the coast. I have a presentiment of success."

"If you should be betrayed."

"I tell you I won't be betrayed!" said he with charming authority.

She tried to smile, but the effort died in its birth. The remorseless old clock went on ticking, and did you ever notice how it shortens its ticks when the moments are most precious?

"Maurice," exclaimed his companion with a vehemence that startled him, "where is your valet? When did you see him last?"

"In faith, two questions easily put, my darling; but your part is the easiest, for I cannot answer. His back shall suffer for his delinquent feet."

"Do you trust him? In my eyes he has ever lacked the blustering openheartedness of the Irishman, the sterling honour of the Scot, or the blunt outspoken frankness of the Englishman."

"My dear, he can hardly be expected to possess those attributes; he is more Spaniard than either. But, by my faith, where can the scoundrel be? I gave him no leave of absence. I shall assuredly chastise him."

"If you ever set eyes on him again."

"What would you infer?"

"That one construction can be placed upon his absence, and one only. He knew you were to leave to-night; others will hear it from him; you will be beset. Oh, I pray you to tarry one night longer here, and not tempt fate."

"I should tempt her by remaining. Gabriel told me this morning that it is generally supposed that I am within a stone's throw of Limerick. By to-morrow their hounds would scent the quarry home. I think your fears run wild. More like the fellow is making love to some peasant maid. So away, vain fears. When real danger comes I will meet it, sabre in hand. Let us turn our thoughts one brief moment upon pleasant themes."

They forgot time while they conversed, just as you or I would have forgotten it; but old time forgot itself, never; so the needle on the dial jerked its black, nervous, hateful little body, up, up, and—whang! whang! whang! The loud strokes distinctly told the hour of midnight, the most still, weird, unearthly, dismal hour of the whole lonesome night. With the first, unexpected, startling, stroke, the two instinctively sprang into each other's arms.

"Farewell, sweet love—my wife," the last part of the sentence was spoken with a lingering cadence. "Be hopeful, and God bless you."

"And may He send His angels to guard thee from these treacherous shores."

A hasty embrace, finished on her part by a deep, suffocating sob, and he was gone, his spurs ringing upon the flagstones. She returned to the gorgeously-furnished room, hugging close the pictured remembrance of him as she saw him last. The full, martial figure dressed in his field garb, with the insignia of rank showing distinctly, but without gaudy display. The hilt of his sword, gleaming in golden flashes from the elegant belt that held it in place; the hat, with its long, horsehair plume, shading but not concealing the beautiful face that Eloise had learned madly to love. And, alas! more than one other woman beside. Oh, if humanity were not so frail, and selfish, and exacting! Why are we so constituted? Whose fault is it that we are born thus? Don't you wish that you could give me a straightforward answer, instead of the dry, theological, unsatisfactory, "Oh, we all fell in Adam." Well, well, let that alone; it is as it is.

Inky darkness enveloped him when beyond the near precincts of the open doorway, where Eloise had sorrowfully waved him adieu, but with a foot sure of the stirrup, and a hand true to the rein, he vaulted into the saddle. He glanced before and behind, on the right side and on the left, above and below him—black, inky darkness. Delusive darkness in which unshapely things rise up, dance and look at you and sink down, only to rise again like a wire puppet that starts the eyeballs of unexpected little people. Now a whole form—a giant; now a pigmy; now a big arm; now a head; anon a flashing eyeball; again an indistinct thing, as a giantess lifts her flaunting robes and flies, yes, flies until another crowd of things intervene, to prevent the eye from watching her gyrations. Diablerie! what a rush of fragments and odds and ends.

Into such questionable company as this the Marquis of Ormand reined his sure-footed steed, whose keen unwavering vision played him none of these annoying pranks. He rode forward with now and then a dark fear thrusting itself into his mind. He kept his steed reined mostly upon the turf roadside. His heels grating upon the rocks made a noise that jarred harshly upon the rider's ear. He made swift headway along the travelled turnpike, but when he

struck upon the broad moor he had to trust mostly to the instinct of his steed. The hours of the summer night hurried on, still the marquis rode without break or stumble.

You remember that a quick, sensitive ear listened for his approach, listened through the boding, dismal cries that circled and echoed through the darkness. As the dainty feet of the black stallion splashed into the soft mire, the sharp, clear, loud, and peculiarly melodious strains of a night bird seemed to burst from the ground at his very feet. The marquis drew in the rein and listened. Again seemingly the spirit of the heather sang the closing strain of an aria.

"What can this mean?" queried the astonished rider, resolving on the instant to challenge the sound. "Whence cometh this strain, earth, air, or heaven, make reply."

"Marquis of Ormand?" close it seemed to the startled nobleman, from his saddle bow.

"Ay; but art thou groom, goddess, or devil?"

"Oh, neither," was the soft answer, "but a warning spirit in the body. Below Limerick, where your waiting skiff frets at her moorings, a squad of the Lord Protector's soldiery await the coming of the Marquis of Ormand."

"Death! say you so? How know you this?"

"Some hours since iron heels clattered this way in search of you."

The nobleman uttered a curse under his breath.

"This is unexpected. I have made no provision for such an emergency. Daylight bursting upon me, I am lost."

"Provisions are made if you will be guided."

"How?"

"Lower down the coast a shallop is hidden in the sedges. She has two oars, is trustworthy—"

"But I cannot find it, child."

"I can; only swing me in front of you. Believe me, there is no time to lose. In an hour's time, if I have counted the night correctly, there will be streaks of dawn in the east."

For one instant the superstitious courtier hesitated; he might be lifting a poniard to his heart. While he hesitated, in the intense darkness he felt a hand take hold of his saddle girth. The next instant a light foot pressed upon his, a hand grasped his arm, and the unseen creature had sprung unassisted upon the startled beast's back. He swerved and reared slightly, but she had caught the pommel of the saddle and was not thrown off.

"Give me the reins, my lord; tarrying here is sure destruction."

"It is a woman," said he, clasping his arms around the alight form, at the same time resigning the guidance of his horse to her.

She recrossed the morass and went easterly, the Marquis of Ormand judged. In half an hour she struck into a hard level road.

"Spur! spur! now, for heaven's sake," was her thrilling whisper. "A streak of dawn within the hour and all is lost."

The goaded horse seemed to fly, but yet the precarious situation of the mysterious rider was maintained. He knew that one foot of hers rested firmly against his knee, one hand grasped the pommel of the saddle, but with his arms around her he could not feel her slip. Apparently the only danger of her falling depended upon his releasing his hold, as he sometimes thought he should, when he felt his blood chill with superstitious terror.

A half hour of this unbroken and fierce riding, and then she drew in the rein with the single exclamation:

"Hist! do you hear anything?"

"Nothing."

"I do; it is the washing of the waves against the rocks. It is unsafe to ride farther; the shore is bluff and dangerous."

She lightly sprang off, and he also dismounted.

"Sweet heaven!" he exclaimed! "I should know this voice; is it not *la petite Nina*?"

"The same, my lord."

"Sweet deliverer, what shall I not owe thee after this night?" and he drew her to his breast and kissed her passionately.

The beautiful ballet girl trembled under the intensity of the embrace, but did not forget her duty.

"This way, my lord, follow me."

But he found some difficulty in going down to the rough shore; groping and stumbling he could hardly keep up with her, even while holding her hand.

"How know you this steep and rocky way?"

"Often within the past few weeks have Millie Casette and I sportively rowed into the sound; it is strengthening to the muscles of the arms and shoulders. Here, my lord, is the skiff, with her nose under our very feet. Step lightly in; we might as well venture carelessly with an egg-shell. There, have you the oars?"

The chain rattled a little in the ring as she unfastened it; seating herself and taking an oar she silently pushed through the sedges.

"Now, my lord, ply your oar and let us place this bold promontory between us and the immediate coast of Limerick."

"With what matchless skill you ply the oar, my girl," observed the nobleman, as he felt the rapidity with which the skiff's sharp prow cut through the waves.

"I have ever sought, my lord, to do that which I undertook in the most perfect manner possible."

"I can vouch for that, Nina. I marvel at the manner in which you maintained your position upon my horse during our ride."

"Oh, that is nothing," said she; "you know, in the career of a ballet girl, we have to assume and maintain very trying positions. Look, my lord, fortune favours us!"

As the gray light of day increased, as if by magic, a wall of mist crept in over the sea and dropped down all around them, and under its protecting canopy they neared the position, where the frigate lay moored at sunset the night before.

Ere long they paused in their labour, poising their oars in the rowlocks, and listened. The marquis's quick ear caught the creaking of cordage, and he gave the signal—a pistol shot from the bow of the boat. It was answered by a similar sound from the frigate, and then came the order to crowd on all the canvas and make ready for immediate sailing.

As the skiff came up to the vessel, whose huge proportions loomed up grandly in the fog, the marquis laid down his oar, and grasping the fair hand of his girl companion, which had rested full oft before in his, he bent towards her.

"Once on the coast of France, sweet girl, and I shall not forget you, neither shall I hesitate to reward you to the uttermost of your wishes."

"What reward do I wish for besides that which you have given me? Ah, you do not know how to prize a woman's love!"

How true were her words; and had she also said how unworthy he was of any sacrifice that her young heart might make for him, she would have spoken but too true. She was young and so unsophisticated that she never thought of the impossibility of one in his rank offering honourable love to one like her. And all the while that he had been making love to her, he was also wooing and winning the daughter of Sir Allen Percival. Still, strange to say, his conscience never once reproached him for perjury.

In the misty morning he kissed her, and climbed up the vessel's side to safety with his lips warm with false promises; and she, rocking upon the water below him, watching the frigate get under weigh, little dreaming that he had left a wife behind him.

CHAPTER III.

Does it really matter what the occupation is? If the labour be well and honestly done, is there anything but a vain and empty title between prince and peasant? Oh, if honest worth alone received its proper insignia, where would be the titled knave to crush it to the earth? It is man's instinct to be amused, and therefore those who in a legitimate way conduce to his well being and render him cheerful, and for the time-being happy, for aught that I see, are persons who do a vast amount of good.

The country under the immediate rule of the Lord Protector saw troublesome times, indeed, and yet places of amusement were not forsaken. The leading papers of the day teemed with encomiums concerning the grace, beauty and marvellous dancing of *la petite Nina*.

These journals not unfrequently fell into the hands of the exiled marquis, who, fresh from sending letters to Eloise, by the way of private ambassadors, would kiss the name of his deliverer on the printed page. Had this been gratitude, it would have been a beautiful trait of character. He gloated in the thought that her laurels were worthless in contrast to the weakest manifestation of his love for her.

Suspicion at last fastened like a vulture upon his bride and her father. They were obliged to embark in the night, and cross the Channel, but providentially touched a foreign shore unharmed, where she was rapturously received by the marquis.

Time passed on. Some months later the marquis, who daily scanned the leading journals of both countries, saw announced that the opera troupe to which *la petite Nina* was attached, would make the tour of France, Germany and Italy. The expected period of embarkation was named, and also the time of her first appearance in Lyons, where the marquis and his family were living. How impatiently he awaited their coming. Oh, for one more glimpse of the beautiful sylph, who had so fired his unstable fancy!

They came at last. At the earliest moment he

procured reserved seats for himself and the marchioness, and restlessly longed for the appointed night to come. The fame of the company had preceded them, and the house was filled to repletion. The opening act was a scene in fairy land, where the weary and belated shepherd falls asleep in the wildwood, and the fairies, in troops, make love to him.

The shepherd lay with his head upon a mossy bank, when soft music is heard in the midst of the flowers. Sweeter, nearer, and wilder it sounds, and directly a bright, beautiful, ravishing face peeps through the shrubbery, and catching sight of the prostrate youth, disappears only to return with another and another to view the intruder upon their sylvan abode. Accustomed to his presence, at length they burst anew into song. The youth, disturbed in his slumbers, murmurs some fairy name. They smile and circle around him, uttering their liquid strains, until, from being disturbed, he arouses, and leaning upon his elbow gazes distractedly about him.

Now the queen advances and commences the most wonderfully graceful and ethereal dance ever witnessed. Dressed in gauzy laces, with gossamer over-skirt of filmy blue, her every movement grace itself, no wonder the house thundered applause from pit to gallery. She seemed like nothing human, so sylph-like, delicate, and lovely, one could only think of angels. The play went on, but the Muses Nine might have appeared, and the marquis would not have known it. He saw nothing but Nina; he heard nothing but Nina; he felt nothing besides the knowledge that amid all that admiring, applauding throng, he alone had held her to his bosom. He no longer remembered that he had a wife sitting beside him. At that moment he would have resigned his rank and wealth for the possession of that fairy creature.

The evening wore on and the play closed, but the marquis knew nothing save that he had seen the bewitching Nina. And she had seen him, too, and the lady with him, and, singularly enough, supposed her to be his sister. So, as he was about making his exit she crossed from the stage to the green-room, and carrying her hand to her heart with that graceful gesture which requires both talent and culture, she made a motion of recognition. The marquis's face lighted up, but his lady brushed haughtily past with a look of scorn upon her proud face.

Just then Nina heard some one speak of the Marquis of Ormand and the marchioness.

"The Marquis of Ormand married?" she vaguely asked herself. "Can it be that he has broken faith with me?"

Poor girl! Had he ever kept faith with her?

She left Lyons without seeing the marquis, having purposely taken lodgings under a fictitious name, therefore he in vain sought her whereabouts. What did she think? How did she feel? I cannot tell you. She might have saved to the night as many a one before her has done, as many a one since will do, but the night held the secret in its bosom. Confident, trustworthy old night!

She performed her part in all the engagements before named, and then she singularly disappeared. How the opera-going world missed her! No one could dance like her; and where was the voice that could thrill like hers? Everywhere went the cry, Where is *la petite Nina*? No answer came.

CHAPTER IV.

WARS, like an epidemic, spread contagiously. The whole Continent seemed convulsed with boding and bursting strife. Suspected nobles and banished exiles fled from one country to another, and back again like a quarry hard driven by dogs. No one pressed a stationary foot upon his native soil. All was unstable.

The Marquis of Ormand, driven by circumstances or fate, returned to his own country, and stood upon the battle-field as acting brigadier-general. Surrounded, cut off and driven to the wall, he was fearfully wounded and left for dead upon the field of strife.

The clear, cold moonlight streamed over the stained and trodden earth; its beams fell upon horseman and steed, and many a face smiled towards the sky with a thought of home or loved ones beautifying their features at the last. Many yet struggled with their wounded lives, unwilling to quit the body.

Look yonder across the wide field. There is something moving under the moonbeams. It stoops and rises, and kneels again. What is it? Who is it? And why are they there? Twinkle, twinkle, comes the little lantern in the gliding hand. Look sharply. Now you see it is a Sister of Charity out upon her heaven-sent mission of mercy. She pours a draught of water upon fevered lips that bless her and die.

Over body after body she comes, her white face gleaming pallid in the spectral light. Close behind her follows her own dark shadow, and a little farther back another shadow denser and more tangible. It is her attendant, bearing bottles of water and cordials. The Sister turns and addresses him.

"Boanges, on what part of the field fought the Marquis of Ormand?"

"Hereabouts, madam; close upon the south-western verge. Heled the Brigade of D'Orsey."

Then the search went on more zealously. Close beside a stark body she paused, and caught her breath with a painful gasp. She stooped. The Marquis of Ormand lay prone at her feet.

"Here he is, Boanges; help me raise him and carry him to the convent of our lady."

Their journey was slow and toilsome enough. The slight Sister found much difficulty in helping carry her helpless burden. Often they waited to rest. At last the convent with its gloomy walls loomed up before them.

"Our toilsome journey is well nigh over, Boanges. Yonder we will deposit our burden."

For hours the wounded marquis evinced no sign of life, but at last consciousness returned. His wounds had been dressed, and a veiled Sister of Charity hovered around his bed. Where was he? She signed him to silence, and day after day she refused to converse with him until he became stronger. Then she told him all that she knew about the battle and of his own wounds.

In a few weeks he was restored to health. Again he begged to be told the name of his kind nurse. She replied that she was known among the Sisterhood as Agnes; that must suffice him. But he could not be content; vague and indefinable memories haunted him. The very morning before his leaving the convent he heard the matin song, and a voice amid the strains of the solemn chant brought back to his memory *la petite Nina*. He was right, but he did not see her again. The Lady Abbess saw him depart, answering his inquiries with the announcement that Sister Agnes was indisposed.

Once more in the field of action the marquis nearly forgot his deliverer. Only occasional flashes of remembrance would come over him, occasional emotions of gratitude.

During the progress of the strife the combatants surged close to the walls of the convent of St. Agatha, and at the close of a day's hard struggle D'Orsey's brigade bivouacked close within the shadow of its gloomy, old, crumbling walls.

"Ormond," said a companion in arms, "up yonder," pointing towards the structure, "they think that they are shut out from the world and all worldliness. Do you suppose that it is so?"

"It is indeed. Go; I have caught a glimpse of more than one Sister's face that has sought a refuge there, and I tell you, young as they are, they either fought desperately with worldliness before they entered the cloistered walls, or else they are fighting it even now."

"You have visited there, then?"

"I was nursed there after my wounds upon the field."

"There—was it? I don't recollect of hearing before but that you were in a hospital."

"No, they picked me up and nursed me back into life. As I said, however, the world has held them fast once, if it does not now. Depend upon it, disappointment drives many a one to that life, and disgust would drive them from it were their vows less binding. What punishment could be invented more keen than monotonous inactivity if the heart broods over a secret sorrow?"

"I think now, Ormond, that you have taken a wrong view of it."

"No, no, no! I wish that I had; one I know within those walls, driven there by disappointment, could give the world more pleasure, perhaps than any other person. Graceful, gifted, and beautiful, with a voice—ah! The sound of it floats in my ear to-day."

"How know you of this? Did she tell you of her gifts?"

"She? never! She did not even identify herself to me as the person whom I knew her to be."

His companion gave him a keen, scrutinizing glance. "Well, this is sad; did she nurse you back into life and health?"

"She did; she found me lying nearly dead upon the luckless field of the 15th ult., and had me borne to the cloister."

"And, Ormond, for you, I apprehend, she wears the unluckiest bonds of convent life, away from the bright world and the healthful pursuits of useful activity?"

The marquis nodded assent.

"And therefore, I suppose, the poor little saint has to repent for your sins, blindly thinking them her own?"

Ormond caught his meaning.

"No, oh no, thank heaven! she was not betrayed, other than by loving a worthless man, who was afraid to gather a luscious fruit because it grew on a lonely stem; other than that she was not injured."

"I rejoice to hear it, but should more rejoice to have shown her a better and a nobler way to usefulness and contentment."

Ormond warmed with the subject, and related in detail his wonderful escape, years before, aided by Nina.

"After that," said his enthusiastic companion, "I would have married her, had I trodden under foot an earldom, a dukedom, or a kingdom."

"Come closely within the shadow of the wall and listen for their closing vesper hymn."

They drew nearer. Ere long the solemn, potent and melodious sound arose.

"Listen," said Ormond. "There! do you hear that strain, that tone above the rest, clearer, sweeter and more powerful? That is hers. Hear the thrilling rise and fall."

"What a voice!" exclaimed his companion, listening entranced.

Softly, solemnly and calmly the lingering cadences died upon the air. The brothers in arms listened silently long after.

"Oh," said Ormond, at length, "if I could only once hear one of those angelic bird trills, with which she used to electrify an audience, it seems to me that I could die content. Shall I never hear it again? All those bewildering tones modulated into dull, never-ending chants and anthems! It distracts me to hear it."

He bowed his head, and his companion, glancing furtively up, thought that he saw a tear steal through the soldier's fingers.

With the morning hostilities were renewed. The battle raged that day close under the cloister walls. Towards evening some of the superstitious soldiers affirmed that off to the right, close to the convent gate, they heard a strain or two of loud, sweet bird-like melody, as if a wounded songster sung his sweetest notes while dying. Be that as it may, after the battle was over they found, close by the convent walls, the Marquis of Ormond lying dead with a Sister of Charity clasped to his breast, just as she had dashed between the ruthless sabres and his heart, only to share his fate. On withdrawing the veil there was exposed the small, beautiful features of Nina, radiant in death; the lips unclashed and smiling just as they were when bursting into that strain so beloved by him; she joyfully sacrificed herself upon the altar of her wild idolatry. M. C.

FACETIE.

AN editor says another twist to the present mode of doing up the ladies' hair, would take them off their feet.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP.—Beware of falling in love with a pair of moustaches, till you ascertain whether the wearer is the original proprietor.

INS AND OUTS.

TOM: "Look here, Jem, there is a hole knocked out of the bottle you gave me."

JEM: "Why here's the hole in it now. If it was knocked out how could it be there?"

A LAZY boy was put to learn the alphabet, but he could only learn the first five letters. He liked his E's so well he couldn't be made to go any farther.

CALCULATING LATITUDE.

"Julius, how do yer fetch der latitude?"

"How do I fetch der latitude—why, you bring de parrollox of der horrison opposite to der node of de hemisphere, and from de right angle struck by de converse proportions, you find de quotient in de lunar caustic, subduced from the orbit of de arf."

A CAUTIOUS WITNESS.—"Small thanks to you, sir," said a plaintiff to one of his witnesses, "for what you said in this cause." "Ah, sir, but just think of what I didn't say."

At a coloured party in New York, Sambo asked Dinah if he might help her to some of the breast. "Now, ain't you 'shamed, Sambo, to say breast before the ladies? I'll take a piece of turkey bosom."

A RUMOUR is gaining ground that the ladies are going to exercise the leap year prerogative of offering their seats to gentlemen in the cars, for the purpose of putting the latter to shame and setting them a good example for the next three years.

THE giving of nicknames has always been common among the vulgar of all countries, but it seems likely to become fashionable in France, and among ladies too! At the present moment there is one

immensely grand lady, who bears among her intimates the nickname of "the Lilly," and another that of "Yellow Slippers!" but, whilst some of the designations adopted are pretty or harmless, others are almost insulting. Of one, for example, the nearest translation is "Dirty face!" and another is "Piggy!"

BEHAVIOUR AT TABLE.

"I wish you would behave better at the table," said a boy to his little sister, rather hastily, one evening.

"Don't speak so," replied his mother; "she is a good little girl, on the whole."

"I don't see where the good comes in," he replied.

"It comes in right after the a," said his sister.

A BERKSHIRE paper says that a fellow in that vicinity went courting his girl on Monday evening, and, wishing to be conversational, observed: "The thermomokron is twenty degrees below zelon this evenin'!" "Yea," innocently replied the maiden, "such kinds of birds do fly higher some seasons of the year than others."

ANECDOTE OF DR. FRANKLIN.

His peculiar talent was that of illustrating subjects by opposite anecdotes. After the news of the destruction of the stamped paper in America had arrived in England, the ministry sent for the doctor to consult with; and, in conclusion, offered this proposal: "That if the Americans would engage to pay for the damage done in the destruction of the stamped paper, &c., the parliament would then repeal the act."

The doctor having paused upon this question for some time, at last answered it as follows:

"This puts me in mind of a Frenchman, who, having heated a poker red-hot, ran furiously into the street, and addressing the first Englishman he met, there, 'Hak! Monsieur, voulez-vous give me de plaisir, de satisfaction, to let me run this poker only one foot into your body?'"

"My body!" replied the Englishman; "what do you mean?"

"Vel des, only so far," marking about six inches.

"Are you mad?" returned the other; "I tell you, if you don't go about your business I'll knock you down."

"Vel des," said the Frenchman, softening his voice and manner, "vil you, my good sire, only be so obliging as to pay me for the trouble and expence of heating this poker?"

A PITTSBURGH organ-builder has invented a new stop, which, from the accounts in the Pittsburgh papers, is something wonderful. One paper says: "It expresses the touching tenderness of the human heart, and the tremulous, pathetic tones of the violin. Its effect is indescribable and altogether irresistible. Indeed, the human heart and the nerves which remain unmoved under the influence of its ethereal tones must be composed of wood and leather."

SPEAKING FRENCH.

Mrs. Blugg, who has spent ten days in Paris, is under the impression that she speaks French. She has accordingly a French servant, whom she always addresses in her native tongue.

SCENE: Mrs. Blugg's tea table. Mrs. Blugg wishes for some milk in the over.

Mrs. Blugg: "Victorine! Vouly voo un—un—pas lait—ahom!"

Victorine (confused): "Un Poulet! Oh, madame, vant de cold chicken!"

[Servant vanishes to the larder for the carcass of a cold fowl.]

ABRAHAM HUNT, an old resident of Williamsburg, will be remembered by many of the older residents of Hampshire for his quaintness and love of a joke. On one occasion, at the hotel at dinner, he inquired for a chicken, which proved to be remarkably tough, whereupon the old gentleman asked the landlady where the fowl came from. She knew her customer; and replied that "it came from Williamsburg." "Impossible!" said Mr. Hunt, "for the town hasn't been incorporated over forty years."

SPEECHES BY MACHINERY.—A public dinner this hot weather! What a horrible idea! And still more dreadful is the thought that one might have to make a speech there. What a blessing it would be if after-dinner speeches could be made by some machinery! Can not some inventive genius hit upon a plan by which to get a speech made, without the bore of making it? Everyone knows everything that anyone can say, when called on for a speech; and if nobody were to make one, surely nobody would suffer. By the side, say, of the chairman, a wax figure might be placed, modelled to resemble him in features and in figure. This dummy might, by clockwork, get upon its legs, when wound up by the toastmaster, and might be made to mumble what

might pass for a good sample of after-dinner oratory. To carry out this notion with suitable effect, each famous dinner talker should go about provided with a model of himself, supplied with tubes and tones to imitate his own peculiar voice. Perhaps after awhile the presence of a speaker might entirely be dispensed with, and his effigy alone be invited to attend. When this is happily the fashion, what rejoicing there will be among our martyred public diners, and what a spoiling of digestion and of temper will be spared them! We recommend our nation to the Humane Society, whose duty clearly is to rescue public orators from floundering about in a perfect flood of verbiage, and often well nigh sinking in the middle of a speech.—*Punch*.

A CHOICE OF EVILS.

Nephew (who knows his relative's peculiarities): "This won't do for you, uncle, it's a smoking carriage!"

Uncle (horrid crabbed old bachelor): "Ugh! 'Tis any rate it'll be safe from women and children!"—*Punch*.

LEVITATION BY LAW.—Whether or no Mr. Home, the Medium, was ever lifted into the air by spirits, people may question, but nobody can doubt that, at the suit of Mrs. Lyon, when he was arrested he was taken up.—*Punch*.

A DESPERATE CASE!

First Driver: "How's poor Bob?"

Second Driver: "Oh, he's a good deal better—takes his lotions more regular—"

First Driver (reassured): "Ah!"—*Punch*.

TWIN SISTERS OF CONSOLATION.

Helen (to Bob, whose picture has been "skied"): "But fancy, if it had been put close to the ground, where all the skirts would have rubbed against it!"

Clytemnestra (to Bill, whose picture is ever so much under the line): "But fancy, if it had been hung so high that nobody could have seen it!"

Tom (whose picture has been rejected altogether. Aside): "Now, I wonder what those girls will manage to say to me?"—*Punch*.

"LIST, LIST, OH, LIST!"

Recruiting Sergeant: "Want to 'list, my man? You're just the smart sort of chap we want!"

Smart sort of Chap: "Oh, indeed—lost yer colonel then, have ye? Well, I'll think about it and let ye know?"—*Fun*.

A FREE TRANSLATION.

The poet was wrong—it a fault of the tribe is—When "*Medio*," said he, "*tutissimus ibis*." For if you should chance to apply to a greedy hum, You're not very safe when you go to a medium.—*Fun*.

EX-PLANET-ORY NOTE.—The man who is fated to have his pet bunion perpetually trodden on is an ill-starred creature. Why? Because he is under the influence of Capery-corn.—*Fun*.

MR. BOUVIER has applied for leave to change his name and adopt that of *Boulevardier* in its stead.—English translation, Mr. Turnover.—*Tomahawk*.

ITALY requires our ascent to cross the frontiers since the fell (Fell) system has been applied so successfully to the Mont Cenis Pass.—*Tomahawk*.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

MAD DOG BITES.

Two months ago, a lady was bitten by a dog; the next day, the husband, in whipping the animal, was bitten on the hand; the dog was killed, the wound healed, and the circumstances were almost forgotten; but a few days since the husband experienced some difficulty in swallowing, soon fell into horrible convulsions, and died. The wife is well. As all are exposed to the bites of domestic animals, cat or dog, the mind ought to be informed as to what ought to be done on the spot.

The moment any one has been bitten or stung, a rag should be thoroughly wetted with spirits of hartshorn and patted on the bitten place for an hour, then bound on, to be repeated for twenty-four hours, for two reasons; the hartshorn creates a smarting, and redness and inflammation, which keeps the blood on the surface, tends, as it were, to keep the poison on the outside, so that it may be washed out. Second, the virus of poisonous bites and stings is an acid; hartshorn is the strongest alkali, and will antagonise an acid in an instant. If no hartshorn is at hand, take the ley of wood ashes, or even make a poultice of fresh wood ashes and water, which make an alkali, let it remain on the wound until some hartshorn can be procured.

A dog ought not to be killed if he has bitten a person, although he may appear to be mad, because such animals, when allowed to become quiet and composed, have often returned to a perfectly natural

condition, and thus the mind of the person bitten has been saved from most terrible forebodings.

Medical observation shows that about one person in twenty, bitten by mad dogs, become hydrophobic. In one noted case, a dog bit twenty-one animals and persons, and but one of those became hydrophobic. Not all persons exposed even to small-pox take it; or to cholera, measles, or any other communicable disease; showing that even dreadful diseases invade only those systems, or states of constitution, which are susceptible to their influence. A brewer's drayman, who has been swilling several quarts, if not gallons of beer daily, for forty years, if scratched on the hand with a pin, recovers from it, if at all, very slowly, often never; sometimes death follows in a few days from convulsions or mortification. I knew a gentleman of wealth, whose foot slipping as he was stepping into his carriage, the shin-bone was thrown against the scraper or step, and he died of mortification of the limb in a few days; because he was a steady hard-drinker of whiskey, and his system had no power of recuperation or resistance against disease. This principle is proven by the case in hand; the husband died, the wife was unaffected. It is not impossible that if a perfectly healthy man of strong mind were bitten by a mad dog, he would not become hydrophobic, but the precautions named ought to be taken by all, even if the dog or cat be not mad.

HER GIFT.

"Oh give me that you prize the most,
To prove your love sincere;
Whate'er is precious to your heart:
Something with which you would not part
Except to one most dear."

I looked upon her glowing face,
And proffered this request;
'Twas but a passing whim of mine,
That she should give the sweetest sign
That I her heart possessed.

She drew a bracelet from her arm.
'Take this, my love,' she said.
'It is the richest thing I own,
Though valued not for gold alone;
'Twas worn by one now dead.'

I shook my head, and would not take
The glittering amulet;
But clasped it on her arm again:
'Oh, love, such gift would cause me pain,
In causing your regret.'

'Then here's a ring,' she murmured soft;
'Tis neither rich, nor new.
Oh, prithee, this dear token take,
And wear it for the giver's sake,
Who gives her heart to you.'

'Nay, dearest, all these trifles keep,
And grant me, I beseech,
Some bliss that wealth could never buy,
Some bliss that love would not deny
To my imploring speech.'

She raised her face, until her eyes
Were level with my own;
And with a blush, and roguish smile,
That said: "I meant to all the while,"
Her loving arms were thrown

About my neck; the while her face
Was in a brief eclipse;
And then, and there she gave, I know,
The sweetest gift she could bestow:—
Her heart was on her lips!

J. P.

GEMS.

If you would kill a slander, let it alone.
MISERY requires action; happiness repose.
He who has most of heart knows most of sorrow.

ESTHER is the mother of love; but the daughter is often older than the mother.

WOMAN'S CHEERFULNESS.—Concerning nothing do we come to more false conclusions and make more false steps than concerning woman's cheerfulness. Ah! how many women are there who pine unknown, despond smiling, and wither jesting; who, with bright, joyous eyes, flee into a corner, as if behind a fan, that there they might right gladly break out into tears which oppressed them; who pay for a day of smiles by a night of tears—just as an unusually transparent, clear, and mistless day surely foretells rain!

EASTBOURNE CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL.—An amateur concert was given at the Hanover-square Rooms in aid of the Convalescent Hospital at Eastbourne, established in 1864. The building used for the

first three years of its existence has been found wholly inadequate, and in July last a site having been obtained, by the kindness of the Duke of Devonshire, the foundation stone was laid of an edifice which will be sufficient for the accommodation of at least 100 convalescents and 30 incurables. The total cost of completing and furnishing the hospital has been roughly estimated at 30,000*l.*, of which 16,000*l.* has been raised. To further this good work nearly seventy ladies and gentlemen, all amateurs, gave their aid at the concert. The result will be a handsome contribution to the funds of the Eastbourne Hospital.

STATISTICS.

LOANS ON RATES.—The annual report presented to Parliament by the Home Secretary shows that between the 1st August, 1866, and 1st August, 1867, sanctions to loans on mortgage of rates have been granted to the following places:—Bristol, 158,000*l.* for street improvements; Bath, 3,000*l.* for sewerage; Horfield, 1,900*l.* for drainage; Old Swindon, 500*l.* for drainage and irrigation; Taunton, 1,600*l.* for street improvements; and Weston-super-Mare, 5,000*l.* for drainage.

THE REVENUE.—The total revenue for the year ended March 31, 1868, was 69,600,218*l.* sterling; of this sum, 22,050,000*l.* was derived from the Customs, 20,162,000*l.* from the Excise, 9,541,000*l.* from stamps, 3,509,000*l.* from land and assessed taxes, 6,177,000*l.* from the Property Tax, 4,630,000*l.* from the Post-office, and 345,000*l.* from Crown lands, the miscellaneous receipts amounting to 2,586,218*l.* The total ordinary expenditure amounted to 71,236,241*l.* 26,571,750*l.* of which was for interest and management of the Permanent Debt, for terminable annuities, interest of Exchequer bonds, Exchequer bills, and bank advances for deficiency, 1,693,898*l.* for charges on the Consolidated Fund, (the largest item of which was 672,559*l.* for the Courts of Justice,) and 42,770,593*l.* for supply services, 15,418,581*l.* of which was required for the army, 11,168,949*l.* for the navy, 1,491,314*l.* for miscellaneous civil services, and 2,000,000*l.* for the Abyssinian expedition.

MISCELLANEOUS.

ROTHSCHILD the great are going to lend six hundred millions of francs to Italy.

THE Sultan of Turkey has just ordered to be manufactured in Paris a silver table, the price of which will not be less than three million of francs.

THE Belgian volunteers of Liege and Antwerp have recently presented beautiful books of photographs to Miss Coutts, through the Baron de Jardin, in recognition of the splendid hospitality shown to them by that lady last year at Holly Lodge.

A VIOLENT shock of earthquake was felt at Tachkent, in Russia, on the 5th of May. It lasted nearly a minute, the direction being from south-west to north-east. All the buildings were shaken, and most of them seriously damaged.

It has been found, while firing at the running-man target at Wimbledon, which is scarlet on one side and gray on the other, that the scarlet dazzles the eye, and is hence the most difficult to hit, from leaving a red streak behind it, in its advance, which unsettles the aim. The gray side was struck seventy-four times and the red only forty-two times. It is a curious fact, too, it seems, that those with gray eyes hit fairer than those with eyes of other colours.

RULES TO REGULATE OUR CONDUCT.—A man should be wise in dispute; a lion in the battle and conflict; a teacher in his household; a counsellor in the nation; an arbitrator in his vicinity; conscientious in action; content with his state; regular in his habits; diligent in his calling; faithful in his friendship; temperate in his pleasure; deliberate in his speech. So he will be happy in his life, easy in his death, and an esteemed example of his successors.

FOXES IN CHURCH.—In a secluded valley of the Yorkshire wolds stands the ancient church of Wharfedale, quite apart from all human habitation. Only on Sundays is the church frequented, and the congregation have been somewhat surprised to find a breed of foxes in possession. An air drain for ventilation from the outside has been used as an "earth," and by this means access has been gained to the pulpit, beneath which an old fox and her litter of fine cubs are, except when unearthed during Divine service, comfortably domiciled. The novelty has been communicated to Morgan, Lord Middleton's huntsman, who declares that during his 40 years' experience he never before heard of such a circumstance, and never met with a finer brood of foxes.

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BOOKS RECEIVED.

The Adventures in Love and Politics of Sir Timothy Fickle, PART I. By SAMUEL RICHARDSON. (Norwich: Soman & Howes.) An amusing rhytmical stricture upon the follies and hypercity of the age, which the author describes as a Hadibrastie poem, it being an imitation of that immortal composition.

Sanitary Siftings. By a NAVAL OFFICER. (E. & F. N. Spon.) A pamphlet embodying a master-of-fact view of the many systems of sewage that have of late years been tried, and strongly advocating the adoption of the Rev. Henry Moule's earth method, *versus* the water system. The arguments are written tersely, and are in a great degree conclusive.

Lost Among the Wild Men. By WILLIAM DALTON. (Houlledge & Sons.) A work in which, as in the whole of the series of Mr. Dalton's Eastern romances, truth and fiction are so admirably interwoven, that it is difficult to know where the one finishes and the other begins. From first to last its pages teem with interesting and exciting incidents and adventures, on perusing which the most careless reader cannot fail to glean a vast amount of information as to the manners and customs of the various countries which the hero and heroine visit. Without being in the least "sensational," it is exciting, and will be read with deep interest by both young and old, as were the same author's "Will Adams, the First Englishman in Japan," and his "Wolf Boy of China."

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. H.—In a limited liability company the shareholders are only liable for the full amount of their respective shares.

FORETRY.—"Neptune and Eolus," and "Lines on the Finding of the Remains of Sir John Franklin," by R. S.; are respectfully declined.

A STONE CUTTER.—If you carve a "coat of arms" over your door, you will most assuredly make yourself liable to pay the tax for armorial bearings.

RAYMOND.—The Reverend Francis Henry Egerton, eighth Earl of Bridgewater, originator of the Bridgewater Treatises, was born in 1758, and died in 1829.

JULIA.—The meaning of the German proverb, "Alter schilt vor Thorheit nicht," is, "Age is no preservative against a man making a fool of himself."

A CANNON.—The word calibre, in gunnery, means the bore or opening of a gun. The diameter of the bore is called the diameter of its calibre; this term has reference to all pieces of artillery.

A. J. LUCAS.—The name you mention should properly be pronounced as spelt, but long usage has given it the sound of *Co-burn*; any other pronunciation would be deemed pedantic.

A CORKMAN.—The rosin and bees' wax when melted must be formed into sticks, and then applied to the part affected, like hard or rolled pomatum; it will not leave a mark.

EDITH VERNON.—To promote the growth of the hair, take 2 pints of olive oil, 1 drachm of otto of roses, the same of oil of rosemary, mix well; use occasionally, rubbing it into the roots of the hair.

M. D. C.—To polish brass, take 1 part of rosin slum, and 16 parts of water; mix well. The article to be polished must be made warm, then dipped in the mixture, and afterwards rubbed with fine tripoli. This process will impart the brilliancy of gold.

M. B.—1. If you are sure your admirer is paying his addresses to another, at the same time as yourself, cast him aside at once, as worthless; but be convinced first. 2. To improve the colour of the hands, rub a little glycerine into them, when retiring to rest, and wear gloves.

EMILIA.—To love the beautiful in all things, to surround ourselves, as far as our means permit, with all its evidences, not only elevates the thoughts and harmonizes the mind, but is a sort of homage we owe to the gifts of God and the labours of man.

THEA.—The following is an excellent specific for the removal of tape-worms: take 2 oz. of pumpkin seeds, skin them, pound the inside to a pulp, mix sugar with it, and after fasting one day, take the whole for a dose; two or three hours after take a little castor oil.

ROSEBUD.—1. To make a soda-cake, rub a quarter of a pound of butter into 1 lb. of flour, then add half a pound of currants, half a pound of sugar, 1 teaspoonful of milk, 3 eggs, 1 teaspoonful of carbonate of soda, whisk the eggs well, stir them into the flour, &c., with the milk, in which the soda

should be previously dissolved, and beat the whole up together with a wooden spoon; divide the dough into two pieces, put them into buttered moulds or cake-tins, and bake in a moderate oven for nearly an hour. The mixture must be extremely well beaten up, and not allowed to stand after the soda is added to it, but must be placed in the oven immediately. Great care must also be taken that the cakes are done through, which may be ascertained by thrusting a knife into the middle of them; if the blade looks bright when withdrawn, they are done; if the tops acquire too much colour before the inside is sufficiently baked, cover them with a piece of clear white paper, to prevent them from burning. 2. Colour of hair, red.

G. DAWSON.—Debal means the hollow space or excavation formed by removing earth for the construction of parapets in fortification; thus the ditch or fosse whence the earth has been taken represents the debal, while the earth itself, so removed, constitutes the rembal.

HENRY S.—"That I do now leave the chair," is the question put by the Speaker, prior to the whole House going into committee to consider the provisions of a bill after the second reading. Teller is a member appointed by the Speaker, when a division takes place, to count the number of members voting for or against a motion.

CLARA.—The true manner of judging of the worth of amusements is to try them by their effect on the nerves and spirits the day after. True amusement ought to be, as the word indicates, recreation, something that refreshes, resting the body and the mind by change, and imparting cheerfulness and alacrity to our return to duty.

ALFRED.—"Halcyon Days" is a term used to express any season of happiness, prosperity, or peace, and is said to have originated from the Alseid or Kingfisher, supposed by Aristotle and Pliny to have only sat for seven days, in the depth of winter, and that during that period, mariners might sail in full security.

M. A. R.—1. Avoid salt meat and fish, be moderate in eating and drinking, and take open-air exercise; this course pursued for a short time will do no doubt produce the desired effect. 2. To cure pimples, take 3 oz. of rosewater, 1 drachm of sulphate of zinc; mix well, then damp the face with it, and gently dry it off; afterwards apply a little cold cream.

TO ELIZA.

Paint her, limner, paint her fair,
Seeming fresh as morning air;
Paint her like the violet blooming,
Modest, mild, and unassuming.

In the rose-bud dip your pencil,
From the sunbeam steal your tinsel,
Ask the lily for its hue,
Court the sky for its pure blue.

Then, by Venus Cupid fired,
Then, by Venus' glance inspired,
Exert your skill, your powers try,
And sketch for me my fair one's eye.

Every beauteous grace combining,
Every lovely look refining,
Paint her such in form and mien,
As mortal ne'er before was seen!

J. T. Y.

J. C. H.—To remove superfluous hair, take 16 oz. of fresh burnt lime, 2 oz. of pearl-ash, 2 oz. of sulphuret of potash; reduce to a fine powder in a mortar, then put it into closely-corked phials. For use, a little of the powder must be made into a paste and immediately applied, the part first being bathed with warm water; should it irritate the skin, wash it off with warm vinegar.

MIRIAM.—Doice is an Italian word, used in music to denote that the passage over which it is written is to be played in a soft, smooth, and delicate manner. In instrumental music this term is generally applied to those portions of melody which are so peculiarly adapted to the voice, that the performer cannot express them better than by taking the vocal tones as his guide.

DRUMMOND.—Druids were an order of priesthood among the ancient Germans, Gauls, and Britons, so named from their veneration for the oak. They had the administration of sacred things, were the interpreters of the gods, and supreme judges of the land. They headed the Britons who opposed Caesar's first landing, 55 B.C. They were exterminated by the Roman governor, Suetonius Paulinus, when defending their country, A.D. 68-69.

SAMUEL.—The Swedenborg Society was established in 1810, under the name of "The Society for Printing and Publishing the Writings of the Hon. Emanuel Swedenborg;" its object is to keep in print and publish the writings of Swedenborg, in the original Latin, and in English translations. The Society is supported by voluntary gifts and subscriptions. A meeting of the members takes place on the third Tuesday in June of each year.

JAMES.—Chloroform, the now well-known anæsthetic, is a compound of carbon, hydrogen, and chlorine, and is manufactured from alcohol, water, and bleaching powder. It was discovered by Soubeiran in 1831, and its composition was determined by Dumas in 1834. The term chloric ether was applied in 1820 to a mixture of chlorine and olefiant gas. Chloroform was first applied as an anæsthetic by Dr. Simpson, of Edinburgh. It was first administered in England on December 14, 1846, by Mr. James Robinson, surgeon dentist.

PHILIP.—The dahlia was brought from Mexico, of which place it is a native, in the present century. It was first cultivated by the Swedish botanist, Professor "Dahl," and soon became a favourite in England. In 1816, about two months after the battle of Waterloo, it was introduced into France, and the celebrated florist, André Thouin, suggested various practical improvements in its management. The botanist "George," shortly before introduced it at St. Petersburg; hence the dahlia is known in Germany as the "Georgina."

DAVID.—The Princes of Wales are as follows: 1st, Edward of Carnarvon, King Edward II.; 2nd, Edward of Woodstock, the Black Prince; 3rd, Richard of Bordeaux, Richard II.; 4th, Henry of Monmouth, Henry V.; 5th, Edward of Westminster, son of Henry VI. and Margaret of Anjou; 6th, Edward, who was murdered in the Tower; 7th, Edward of Middleham, son of Richard III. and the Lady Anne; 8th, Arthur of Winchester, eldest son of Henry VII.; 9th, Henry of Greenwich, King Henry VIII.; 10th, Henry Frederick, eldest son of James I. and Anne of Denmark;

11th, Charles of Dunfermline, Charles I.; 12th, Charles of St. James's, Charles II.; 13th, George Augustus of Hanover, George II.; 14th, Frederick Louis, eldest son of George II.; 15th, George William Frederick, George III.; 16th, George Augustus Frederick, George IV.; 17th, Albert Edward.

CATERPILAR.—To make mace, one gallon of water put 5 lb. of honey, when the water is hot, the honey must be added; boil it one hour and a half; as soon as the scum begins to rise, take it off and continue skimming as long as any arises; put 2 oz. of hops to every ten gallons of liquor, and 2 oz. of coriander seed, each in a separate bag; add the rind of three or four lemons and oranges, if you like them. When cool, put it into a cask with a bottle of brandy, and stop it up quite close. It should stand about nine months in the cask, and for the sweetness to go off, it should stand still longer.

YOUNG HOUSEWIFE.—1. To clean silk, mix sifted stale bread crumbs with powder blue and rub it very thoroughly all over; then shake it well, and dust it with a very soft cloth. 2. To soften hard water, cut some soap into small pieces, and put into a saucupail full of water, and well boil; then add this to the water in which the flannel is to be washed, which will render it quite soft. 3. You must have patience, time only will effect a cure. 4. Your handwriting requires care and practice; it should be equally as good for a National School Teacher as for any other, of the two more so.

E. C. M., twenty-eight, fair, 5 ft. 9 in., in a good trade, and a Wesleyan.

E. W., twenty-six, a good temper, and very steady. Respondent must be respectable.

JULIA, twenty-one, of an affectionate disposition, and 100l. per annum.

H. W. K., nineteen, fair, blue eyes, 5 ft. 8 in. Respondent must have a small income.

EDWARD S., twenty-five, dark hair, fair complexion, good looking, and of gentlemanly appearance.

EDITH, nineteen, medium height, dark, fond of home, but has no money. An engineer or midshipman preferred.

W. JAMES, tall, good looking, in business, income about 300l. Respondent must be well educated, good looking, and have a small income.

C. A. R., twenty-five, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, but no money. Respondent must be tall, and about thirty; if dark preferred.

ROSEBUD, nineteen, medium height, dark, cheerful, and industrious. Respondent must be a respectable young man about twenty-two.

MEDICAL STUDENT, twenty, 5 ft. 9 in., black hair and mustache. Respondent must be pretty, amiable, of a refined taste, and good social position. Money no object.

MAINTACK, forty-eight, a widower, 5 ft. 10½ in., dark, as both hair, hazel eyes, and has 200l. per annum. Respondent must be fond of home, and have a small income.

J. H. V., twenty-one, 5 ft. 9 in., fair complexion, black hair and mustache, an artist, with 110l. per annum. Respondent must be about nineteen, 5 ft. 6 in., good figure, fond of music and dancing.

FLORENCE and MINNIE. "Florence," eighteen, medium height, fair, light hair, and blue eyes. "Minnie," seventeen, fair, golden hair, blue eyes, well educated, and has a moderate income. Respondents must be tall, fair, and about twenty.

G. G., thirty-nine, tall, a widower, dark hair and beard, respectable and good looking, one son five years of age, and has a small independence, with prospects of funded and landed property. Respondent must be a widow, without family, and about thirty-five, with 200l. per annum not objected to.

WILLIAM TOPLOCK, GINGER, CHARLES SPIKE, WILLIAM BITE, and BEN BEACE. "William Toplock," twenty-eight, 5 ft. 6 in., a petty officer, fair, and good tempered. Respondent must be fair, and fond of home. "Ginger," 5 ft. 8 in., fair, and good looking. Respondent must be fair, fond of home, and not more than twenty; a dressmaker preferred. "Charles Spike," twenty-six, and 5 ft. 6 in. "William Bite," 5 ft. 8 in. Respondents must be good looking, and fond of singing. "Ben Beace," twenty-two, 5 ft. 7 in., black curly hair, and good looking.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

LONELY HARRY is responded to by—"Merry Little Nellie," nineteen, dark hair and eyes, affectionate, and domesticated; and—"Ada," nineteen, accomplished, fair, blue eyes, golden hair, and in receipt of 100l. per annum.

ARTHUR by—"Arthur," eighteen, medium height, light hair and eyes, handsome, and good tempered. J. W. SOUTHPORT by—"Edith," eighteen, tall, dark, and a good musician—"Rosebud," eighteen, 5 ft. dark brown hair and blue eyes, musical, and domesticated; and—"Minnie," eighteen, brown eyes, Auburn hair, and has a little money.

MRS. F. by—"Casta," twenty-eight, tall, fair, well educated, and domesticated. E. H. G. by—"M. M. O.," nineteen, 5 ft., fair, domesticated, and respectfully connected.

ANGUSTUS ORLANDO by—"Lizzie Vernon D." CLARA by—"Comptroller," twenty-two, 5 ft. 9 in., good looking, dark brown hair, black mustache and whiskers—"Frank de M.," twenty-five, a clerk, tall, dark brown hair, whiskers, and mustache; and—"Flo Nic," twenty-three, a mechanic, 5 ft. 9 in., dark brown hair, blue eyes, good looking, and has a little money.

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London: Printed and Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, by J. WATSON.